

8클래스 마법사의 회귀

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Revolution of the 8th Class Mage

– 8클래스 마법사의 회귀 –

- Part 2 -

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[Novels&Chill]

CHAPTER 31

INVITATION OF THE IVORY TOWER (1)

“Wow...!”

“How valuable do you think this would be?”

At the mansion which now belonged to Ian. Ledio, Vanessa, Ian and Douglas were sitting near the treasure box that was given to him by the royal family.

“To earn this much money, I would have to sell potions to the Army for at least 50 years.”

“What if I were to help you?”

“Hmm, then approximately 49 years?”

“Daddy!”

Ledio and his son were focused on the amount of gold coins in the treasure box. How much would it be worth? That was their concern.

“It was given to my boy Ian...”

On the other hand, Vanessa didn’t care about the amount.

She was only concerned that the Emperor gave a present to him.

A present that was given to her son, and not to others.

“By our Emperor who lives in the royal palace...”

The Emperor was the man with the most authority in the Empire.

Thusly, such a powerful man would give such a magnificent present to her son.

It was the best news she could ever hope to receive in her life as a mother.

“Is it the reason he gave me jewels without hesitation?”

Ledio mumbled quietly.

He unknowingly said it out loud.

“Jewels?”

Douglas, who was sitting next to Ledio asked.

“Did you say jewels?”

Vanessa asked about it, too.

Did someone give him jewels as well? Who?

“N... n... nothing. Haha.”

Fortunately, no one asked further about it.

Ledio let out a sigh of relief.

Recently, he kept unconsciously saying what was on his mind.

‘I haven’t been able to control myself since I returned here.’

The capital Greenriverdium was a nightmare to Ledio. Although he was born and raised here, there were so many bad things that had happened to him here as well. Especially mana addiction. He received that curse in the capital.

‘That mage might already be conducting in another region.’

The man who caused Ledio to suffer from mana addiction.

When he did that to Ledio, he was a mage who was about to graduate from the academy. About one year had passed since then, therefore he must be conducting in another region. It was a normal process to become an official mage to conduct a region.

‘For a while, I am safe. For a while.’

As Ledio knew, the average duration of conduction duties was 5 years.

Hence, he still had enough time.

He may leave this area after finding the cure,

or...

‘I have to stick with sir Ian.’

Ledio had also heard the rumors.

He knew mages better than an ordinary man.
Ian was a genius. An unfathomable genius.
Soon he will be one of the Archmages.

‘I can rely on the stronger side.’

From commoners to nobles, various people formed the Ivory Tower.
Hence, there was no value behind someone’s origin.
To the Ivory Tower, the value of a person was measured through how much magical power and talent they had.

‘Then, that bastard won’t have any choice...’

There existed many ways.
Ledio felt relieved.

“Please, don’t bend your backs and please don’t bow to me. It makes me feel embarrassed... I was once a kitchen maid as well. So...”

“Huh?”

After she finished looking at the coins, Vanessa told the maids not to bow to her with sympathy. They were the maids who were sent by the Emperor along with the treasure. They were stiffly straight and bending their bodies low to bow.

(E/N: for those unaware, a low bow usually signifies that they are bowing to someone with more power with them? at least I think, it is like that in japanese culture)

“M... Mrs. Page, we...”

“I know how you think. It’s not a thing I can change. Other higher men wouldn’t be allowed to do so.”

Vanessa was once a kitchen maid of the province castle.
Her rank was lower than most other maids.
She knew how harsh their lives were.

“I won’t force you to sit and take a rest. But please, at least don’t bend your bodies. It will make your backs hurt later. I am one of the victims of such as well.”

She advised them with her experience.
Once the waist is damaged, it won’t recover easily.

“Hmm, Mrs. Page is so kind.”

Ledio nodded while watching Vanessa’s behavior.

Compared to Ian whose identity Ledio couldn’t even figure out, his mother was innocent and kind. One would hardly think that Vanessa was Ian’s mother.

“Waist, wasn’t it? The elixir for bones and joints...”

“Daddy, wake up.”

Douglas, while leering at his father, he stopped Ledio’s action.

“It will cause you big problems.”

“What kind of problems?”

“She is now a noble, isn’t she?”

“Yeah, because she is the mother of a mage.”

“So you shouldn’t have a relationship with her...”

“W, what are you saying you little brat!”

Ledio was greatly embarrassed by understanding the point.

He was wondering what Douglas was saying.

“Boss won’t like it if he knew about it...”

Still, Douglas was looking at his father suspiciously.

With his stare, Ledio broke out in a cold sweat.

‘He’s daring to go against me, isn’t he?’

As Douglas hung around with Ian, he acted more like an adult.

He was still too young to experience puberty.

‘It can be a side effect I never expected.’

He decided to take Ian’s deal for his son, but now he regretted it a little.

“Ian. How was the meeting with the Emperor, his highness?”

Vanessa greeted Ian.

Ian had returned to the mansion from the palace.

“You just need to say it to his highness once.”

“B-but...”

As Ian entered, the maids bent their bodies again. They knew that the young mage, Ian Page, was the boss of this family.

“It seems these coins and maids, all of them are gifts of the Emperor, his highness. I don’t know if we deserve to have it...”

“Mom, I told you no more bad times. So you didn’t believe me about it?”

“D, didn’t believe? No way. I just couldn’t imagine this much!”

Truly, she couldn’t even imagine it.

All of a sudden, her son became a great mage in one day.

In addition, he received a call from the Emperor, and was escorted to the capital. Furthermore, he received these rewards after having a meeting with the Emperor.

‘I couldn’t ever imagine this much even in my dream.’

Vanessa had lived a very harsh life.

Especially after she had lost her husband. She would happily cry out whenever she heard good news about her son. Because it was her only desire and happiness. However this situation, it was not just a ‘little good’ news, wasn’t it? She still felt like she is dreaming.

“Well, then I should wait longer until you realize what has happened to you.”

Ian understood his mother.

So there was nothing to feel sad about nor was there a reason to be in a hurry. She just needed more time.

‘I couldn’t do this in my former life.’

After she smiled happily, Ian looked at Ledio.

Ian had no idea why, but Ledio seemed nervous.

“Let’s have a conversation.”

“C, conversation? With me?”

Ledio was freaked out.

What's going on?

"Why are you surprised?"

"N, nothing. Good. Conversation is good."

While murmuring, he leered at Douglas.

There must be something between them.

Ian shrugged his shoulder curiously.

Then, he entered the quiet room with Ledio.

"I want you to brew a potion."

"What sort of potion do you want?"

"A potion with this mushroom."

Ian pulled out the mushrooms he had collected one by one.

Even Ledio had never seen that grey mushroom before.

It was a natural. It hadn't been discovered in this timeline yet.

"What is this mushroom?"

"It's called stone heart mushroom, a poisonous one."

"A poisonous mushroom? What sort of potion would you make with it..."

Of course, there were potions which were based on poisonous ingredients.

However, the elixirs that Ian had wanted before, such that they enhanced the magical power of a consumer, none of them used poisonous ingredients.

"It paralyzes nerve systems. It stops the heart as well."

"This mushroom?"

"Yes. Treat it with caution since it's a deadly one."

It was a scarily dangerous mushroom.

While shaking his body, Ledio looked at the mushroom.

Stone heart mushroom was it? Would it even be recorded on the illustrated book?

"Then what kind of potion do you want me to brew with such dangerous ingredients?"

I may able to brew a poison, but not a potion..."

"Do you know interrogation magic?"

“I do.”

Ledio also experienced it once in his past.

The bastard mage, who caused mana addiction to him, once used it on Ledio.

Ledio knew it very well.

“I want to avoid the interrogation magic.”

Soon, Ledio understood Ian’s thoughts.

Actually, he was already able to guess it when he heard the words, interrogation magic.

“Can you brew it?”

“I think I can, but is it urgent?”

“It is. The faster, the better.”

“Hmm...”

Ledio thought briefly.

Then he could recite a few ingredients.

He could brew such a potion by mixing those ingredients well.

“Sigh, Douglas won’t like it...”

Ledio spoke out unexpected words.

“Ah, these types of potions need a lot of experiments. To find out whether the potion works properly, or if there are any side effects. Since we couldn’t just try it on a human, we usually try it on animals. Such as mice and rabbits.

Although Douglas wanted to be an alchemist, he had grown up as a normal child. Killing many animals won’t make him happy.

“Douglas may cry out and beg me not to do experiments on animals.”

“I will try to persuade him.”

It won’t be that hard. Ian nodded his head.

Suddenly,

“Sir Ian.”

A maid's voice could be heard through the door.

“The ivory tower sent you a letter.”

CHAPTER 32

INVITATION OF THE IVORY TOWER (2)

A letter received by the maid.

There appeared to be nothing on it.

However, any mage would recognize the secret behind it.

Mana was flowing through the letter.

‘Geezer’

From old times, the ivory tower had preferred some secret ways like this.

The secret communication that can be only done between mages, who had a mana heart and brain at same time. It effectively drew a feeling of superiority and involvement from mages.

*whirrr... *

After Ian injected his mana to the letter, words were slowly revealed.

‘To our dear mage, Ian Page.’

[As much as the royal family does, we are also looking forward to meeting you...]

As far as ordinary letters go, it started with common greetings.

Skimming it quickly, Ian looked at the main part.

[According to our traditions, you may need to pass the processing of the academy. But, what’s the point in letting your time be wasted when you are already one of our talented mages?]

As Ian had expected, the ivory tower didn’t wait for long.

They wanted to test Ian’s talent.

As an excuse, with the title of an ‘simple interview’, they wanted to ‘interrogate’ him. Without a doubt, they would set up the strongest interrogation spells in the interview room.

[Hence, In exactly 7 days, we want to invite you to our small meeting. As a proud member of the ivory tower, please attend our meeting.]

The only problem was the given period.

Ian could ask them to delay the meeting date, but Ian didn't want to.

The longer he delay, the more unexpected situations might occur.

“It says we have one week.”

Ian said to Ledio.

The potion must be completed before then.

The time they had was quite a bit shorter than what Ian had expected

Furthermore, Ledio had never used this ingredient before.

“If it seems too tough for you, I can ask this task of several other alchemists...”

If Ian hadn't met Ledio in the Mogrian province, Ian would ask it of several black market alchemists. Ian knew a few who had bad tempers, but were quite skilled. And there were many ways to keep them from talking.

“N, not at all. One week huh? It is possible.”

But, Ledio was quite a talented alchemist.

He had pride in his skills, and it wasn't that much of an impossible task.

“By reducing my sleeping time, it will be ok.”

“Then please, I will bet on you.”

“No problem at all. By the way, please persuade Douglas. Recently he seems to follow you more than me. I can't make sure whether it is good or not. As you know, you aren't an ordinary one...”

Ledio started to chat again.

This was proof that Ledio was confident about the task.

He already had thought of several possible recipes.

His chatting relieved Ian more than a thousand words of promises.

A week wasn't that long of a time period.

And time passed quickly.

*clip clop, clip clop..."

Ian was riding a carriage that was headed for the ivory tower.
To the place where most of the imperial mages were living.

'Its effect will remain for approximately 2 hours.'

Ian recalled Ledio's explanation while grabbing the potion.
Ledio had managed to brew the potion.

"Two hours..."

The interrogation won't be that long, at most it would need to last for an hour.
It would be good enough.

'Finally'

Through the window, an exotic view was revealed.
Grass, flowers, trees and butterflies of various colors.
Although the ivory tower was within the capital.

"They have managed the surroundings like a forest."

It could literally be called a 'forest in the city'.
Since they had moved from the old place, they had built surroundings like this.
It could be called their tradition.

"We have arrived."

With the driver's word, Ian took off with the carriage.
A familiar view of the ivory tower welcomed Ian.
It looked totally different from the old ivory tower.
It was enormous in size, with a well sharpened white outer wall, it was a very well built structure.

"Oh, here he comes, the first mage."

Several young mages approached Ian. They seemed uncomfortable since they had to come out and greet this very young mage called Ian. At this age they must be full of their own pride and superiority. Whoever and whatever Ian is, they didn't care, but they just didn't like to show respect to this young kid.

“Come, boy. High personages are waiting for you.”

The young mage stated in a sharpened and rude voice.

To Ian, they were more cute than intimidating. Due to this Ian felt calmed.

‘High personages, huh?’

These young mages had just became official mages, so they were full of pride. When it came to ‘high personages,’ who they would show respect, there were a few people such as 4th class Arch-mages and the tower lord, Habert.

“There must be a lot of mages I used to know.”

While recalling his memory, Ian had entered the ground floor of the ivory tower.

Mages used to call this area as ‘the sanctuary of beginnings.’

Ian had passed here more than thousands of times in his former life.

It hadn’t changed since the past, actually, future.

‘When I first stepped in here, it was so exciting.’

Ian recalled the moment when he visited here at first.

At that time, everything was interesting to him.

A wide and enormous interior, lit by light globe spells.

Air conditioning systems controlled by magic.

White robed triumphant mages.

Books floating in the air.

An open and free atmosphere, unlike what he had expected.

‘I thought every mage was wise and charismatic.’

He thought like that when he was young, but not now after he had figured out the truth.

The mages of the ground floor were newbies.

Rather than full of dignity, they were full of arrogance.

‘I was similar to them when I was their age.’

With the guidance of the mages, Ian reached the end of the aisle.

A golden disc was floating there.

It was big enough to lift around 5 men at the same time.

Ian was familiar with the disc.

‘Elevator’

The precise title of it was ‘Mana elevator’

Powered by mana only, it brought mages from floor to floor.

Without it, mages would have a hard time climbing up all those stairs.

“Can you see the disc?”

“Yes I can see it.”

“I didn’t mean for you to answer. Step on it.”

The young mage who had been rude to Ian, replied unaffably.

“Know that you are honored. Not everyone is allowed to ride it.”

It was the truth.

The golden disc was only allowed to be used by Arch-mages normally.

To mages, who only ranked themselves with magical talent, it meant many things.

‘The youngest in my former life, too. If I remember it correctly.’

Ian was 19 years old when he was granted the authority to use the golden disc, he had reached the 4th class. This time, he was only 12 years old, but allowed to step on the golden disc. Of course he wasn’t officially a 4th class mage, but soon he would be.

‘Maybe today...?’

As soon as Ian stepped on the golden disc, the disc sensed Ian’s weight, and it vibrated slightly.

It was the preceding clause of strong levitation magic.

Whirrrrrr – !

After vibrating, the elevator started to fly.
Precisely, it was rising upwards.
Without slowing down, it kept rising up.

Gulp!

Ian drank the stone heart potion he had brought.
His senses became dull, and he started to feel dizzy.
It felt like he was a puppet controlled by someone else.
But soon, everything became calm and clear.
He felt no more dizziness.

“Sigh...”

After a long breath, Ian looked up.
The tower had 22 floors.
Passing the ground floor ‘the sanctuary of beginnings’, ‘the sanctuary of training’, ‘the sanctuary of information’, ‘the sanctuary of records’, ‘the sanctuary of rest’, ‘the sanctuary of elements’, etc. There were many different kinds of sanctuaries, and above those, there was a banquet hall, lower council room, upper council room and finally, the 22nd floor.

‘The room of the tower lord.’

The elevator had stopped.
It was way too big to be called a room.
In the room there were 11 mages.
Habert, and 10 other Arch-mages.
Every single one of them had their own characteristics.
From male to female, from old to young.
Unlike other mages, some of them didn’t even wear robes.

‘It seems they won’t go easy on me.’

Members who counted as the best of the best of the ivory tower.
They gathered at the same place, and at the same time they looked at the same boy.
A young mage, Ian Page.
Whose talent was compared to ‘the first mage.’

They had gathered to test his talent.
Or maybe, to tame his dangerous talent.

CHAPTER 33

INVITATION OF THE IVORY TOWER (3)

“Thank you for accepting the invitation of the Ivory Tower.”

Firstly, the Tower Lord greeted Ian.
Ian was a 12 years old young boy.
Nevertheless, he greeted him with manners.

“Come, sit there comfortably.”

Mages surrounded Ian with circle.
The chair was located at the centre, so that every Arch Mage could see it.
And Ian had set on the chair.

“It may confuse you, I understand.”

The Tower Lord lightly yielded his the staff of the Ivory Tower.
Soon, blue colored mana formed words in the air.

“But there is no need to be afraid or shrunken. As a member of the Ivory Tower,
everyone had passed this process once.”

Those words were a report of Ian.
From his brief introduction to his private actions.
They did good job on it.

“As heard, I knew your talent, but still you had done many dramatic things. It is not
just ‘impressive’ things you did.”

While reading the record, the Tower Lord said.
Although he had read it more than hundreds, he kept reading it as he was still
interested.

“But, we are brothers and sisters in mana, which is thicker than blood, aren’t we? But

if any misunderstanding or suspicions between us, we better solve it now."

Suspicion of the Ivory Tower, and their spying.
In addition, a room which was full of interrogation magic.
As Ian had expected.
So, he prepared the stone heart mushroom.

"They are overlooking their magic.'

The best of bests of the Ivory Tower created this interrogation magic.
They must have trusted and felt proud of it.
If Ian can overcome today's interrogation,

'No doubt will be left of me.'

Then, they would only care for Ian's 'talent'.
A precious talent.

"Uh, are you going to torment me or something bad?"

Ian replied as if he knew nothing.
With a warm smile, the Tower Lord replied.
His smile harmonized well with the wrinkles on his face.

"Haha! You joking, right? Those barbaric methods are not our style. We will just ask you some questions. You just have to answer it."

While he saying that, the Tower Lord glanced at the Arch Mages.
It was a silent sign to start the interrogation magic.
A time has come to test Ledio's potion.

"Ian Page. Born in 488 in imperial calendar. Red goat stars. Father was a wandering traveler, Pran Page. Mother was a kitchen maid of the province castle, Vanessa Page. Is there anything incorrect?"

"Everything is true."

There were no lies.
he asked continuous questions related to Ian's identity.
Ian answered it calmly.

The main questions started after that.

“How did you know that goblin corpses can be sold to receive money?”

“I heard it before and tried it. Just in case.”

“I wonder your relationship with the alchemist, Ledio.”

“My mother has a weak body. I needed one who can brew potions for her, a merchant guild introduced him to me. As I heard, mages earn a lot, don’t they? So I hired him.”

“What is the real purpose of visiting the old Ivory Tower ruin?”

“I had seen it in a lot in books. I wished to visit there once in my life.”

There were many questions that were sharp.

Of course, it could be expected.

Ian just needed to answer it step by step, as he prepared.

Everything he said, would become the truth.

“Do you remember the mage, Cecelia?”

“Of course.”

“And you said that you saw she was meeting with masked man, and Cecelia attempted to kill you whenever she saw you at there..... You sure what you said was true? She still kept silence about it.”

“I do. I was close to death.”

Endless questions from the Arch Mages.

Whenever Ian answered one, then a second question came.

“And you truly never learned magic from no one?”

“Yes. Never.”

“Then, from fireball, summoning elements, to frost nova. How do you know all of those formulas? I better want to listen something persuasive.”

Magic was spelt by quickly calculating formulas through mana brain. However, did Ian said he hadn’t learnt any formulas but he could yield magic? In terms of mages, it was impossible.

“Please don’t tell me ‘It just worked’ this time again.”

A statement that Ian said while doing mana test in his home town.

The questioner knew it in detail.

However, Ian answered similar to that.

“...I just visualized.”

“Visualize?”

“For example, imagine a fire appears on my palm.”

While answering, Ian sparked a small fire.

It was a weak level of fire ball.

“I just imagined it. One day, it became real.”

Casting spells by just imagining?

If imagine a small fire, then fireballs appeared.

If he wanted to summon spirits, then he conjured magic.

If he tried to freeze his surrounding, then Frost Nova.

“What nonsense are you sayin...”

It was totally nonsense.

All of those Arch Mages shouted.

That interrogate spell would figure out his lying.

However, nothing had happened.

It only said what Ian said was crystal clear.

The result hadn't changed.

‘He’s not lying?’

Arch Mages quickly checked their interrogation spells.

However, nothing had changed. The strongest interrogation magic of the Ivory Tower kept saying Ian was telling truth.

‘How this could happen?’

The first mage in the legends.

Was Ian truly his reincarnation or someone like him?

‘If he is telling lies.’

It also didn’t make sense.

It meant that their magic couldn’t work on him.

What that would mean?

‘Has he achieved a higher magical class than us?’

The interrogation spell which was casted by the Tower Lord and Arch Mages.
And the mage who was invulnerable from it.

‘That’s impossible. It makes no sense at all.’

Rather, trusting what Ian had said made more sense.
Actually, it had to.

“Hmmm.....”

Endless questions had paused for a while.
While everyone was waiting the Tower Lord’s decision,

“Humph! I don’t care about it!”

A lady who hadn’t questioned to Ian once.
She used to be the youngest 4th class mage, before Ian had appeared.

‘Lady of flame’, ‘Helene’ stood up while smashing the table. Her nickname was named not only because she liked to use fire magic, but also due to her impatient characteristic.

“Who the heck are you?”

“Helene! Calm down. The Tower Lord is with us...”

“Come on, we didn’t gather for this, did we? Stop asking those boring things. Let’s ask something we really wanted to. A real question!”

Mages who are on even same class had their level difference.
And Helene was one of the strongest 4th class mages.
At least, for now.

“With your damn mouth, tell me. Who the heck are you? Stop making up bullshit, huh?
Would you pleaseeee- tell me?”

Helene said very aggressively.

Other mages looked embarrassed, but they looked Ian with interest. They couldn't ask like that, because of their pride.

'Yeah. That's how she was.'

In his former life, Helene acted the same. Rude and aggressive voice and language.

"I thought you already knew it, don't you?"

"What?"

"It's on there as well."

While squaring his shoulder, Ian pointed first sentence of mana words on the air. A section where listed his brief information.

"Ian Page. Born in 488 in imperial calendar. Red goat stars. Father was a wandering traveler, Pran Page. Mother was a kitchen maid of the province castle, Vanessa Page."

Furthermore, he started to read it for her. Every single words, slowly.

"I don't know what to say anymore."

Ian's word contained disregard. And Helene knew it.

"You dare spea.....!"

"Halt!"

The Tower Lord's short shout stopped Helene's angry voice. Even Helene couldn't go against him.

"Let me ask a last question."

This time, the Tower Lord picked his own question. He thought similar to what other Arch Mages had thought. If what Ian said was true, they had to admit his talent. Even if it was lie, still, Ian was great mage.

'However, isn't it too... plain?'

The Tower Lord was curious.

Ian's body kept showing plain bio signals, for any questions they did. It might be just due to his calm characteristics.

However,

'It needs to be checked.'

A question that might sway his calmness.

The Tower Lord asked a question to do it so.

"On the day you did the mana reaction test, I know there was some kind of problem. Do you remember the soldier, Jonathan, who insulted you and your mother, don't you?"

Ian nodded quietly.

There were no specific bio signal change, yet.

"On the next day, the soldier found was dead."

With a sharpened eyesight, the Tower Lord continued his question.

He focused to catch any sort of mental disturbance from Ian.

"Perhaps, the death of the soldier, is it related to you?"

The Tower Lord was a smart man.

He was different to others.

He didn't overlook their magic.

He didn't stop doubting, and testing every possible case.

'However, he wouldn't know it's the power of a potion.'

It was the limit of the Tower Lord for now.

Mages and alchemists were quite close.

They had many chance to collaborate.

They often received good elixirs.

Precisely however, their relationship wasn't horizontal, it was rather a vertical relationship.

‘So, mages only know the basics of it.’

Like Ian knew some herbs, other mages knew basic of alchemy.
Harbert wouldn’t be exception.
Rather, he would know it better than others.

‘However he doesn’t know existence of the mushroom.’

The potion that could avoid the interrogation magic.
Any medical herbs, or poisonous grasses that had such effect.
He wouldn’t even able to imagine such things.

‘I better erase the effect.’

In most cases, poisons wouldn’t affect mages.
They could use their own mana to remove the poison out of their body.
And that was why Ragnar asked Douglas to brew a special poison in former life.

‘He said it would be the last question, didn’t he?’

The Tower Lord cared how he looked.
He was likely to keep the promise that he had spoken once.
Only if he got satisfying result.

‘I will give you the answer you want.’

Ian removed the effect of the stone heart potion.
As he determined, he opened his mouth.

“...I have no idea about it.”
“Are you denying the suspect?”
“Yes I am.”

What Ian just said was clearly a lie.
Naturally, his body reacted.
Several body reactions which the Tower Lord wanted.
Those changes were informed to everyone.
The Tower Lord and other Arch Mages.

‘He’s lying?’

Everyone figure out Ian’s lie.
However, their face became relieved.
The interrogate magic was perfect.
It wasn’t their formula’s problem, nor were they deceived by a higher class mage, nor was it the support of a third person.
Just, what the boy said was true.

‘Still, a kid is kid.’

It was a common thought of the Tower Lord and others.
The boy spoke truth until the last question.
At last, he finally lied for murder.
It meant a lot to them.

‘A talented kid is better than a mage who has already overcome us’.

Wouldn’t this be the best case?
Rather than hiding his overwhelming power.

“Indeed, I don’t think it’s you who killed him, too.”

After his thought, the Tower Lord smiled.
He finally regained his confidence.

“Thank you for answering our tricky question.”

Nobody blamed him about Ian’s lie.
Killing a soldier wasn’t that much of a problem.
Unless he was a mad serial killer.

“I really want to have a meal with you, but still there are many things to do. Please excuse me.”

He had found out everything he wanted from Ian.
He checked everything he wanted to.
Now, the only thing left was Ian’s talent.
An objective measurement of it.

“As you know, the talent you bear, is none of the type we havr faced before. It is unknown mysterious power. So...”

The Tower Lord held the crystal orb on the table.

It was an communicating orb which were connected to every floor of the Ivory Tower.

“We need more precise measurement of your power. Not only your current status, but your potential talent. So that we can help you to guide you as seniors of the Ivory Tower, do you understand?”

More precise measurement of power.

It meant they want to change their ‘estimation’ to ‘fact’, that Ian had reached around 2nd class to 3rd class starter.

‘Now it is the problem.’

There were two ways of classifying magical class.

First, of course, was the amount of mana.

Second, the ‘calculating power’ of the mana brain.

Higher class magic required the mana brain to calculate harder formulas.

If a mage failed to calculate it fast enough and perfectly, the magic wouldn’t be casted. Literally, it was an ‘inborn intelligence’, and many mages couldn’t overcome this wall.

‘I won’t be asked to show my calculating power.’

Ian lied to people that he could yield magic with simple imagination. Thanks to that, they wouldn’t test him it.

‘They will only check my mana pool then.’

Ian expected correctly.

Young mages arrived to the room by riding the elevator.

Mages who guided Ian rudely brought a huge semi-transparent sphere to the centre of the room of the Tower Lord.

‘What...? Did he pass the interrogatiom magic?’

Young mages’ face turned pale.

They assumed it was an exaggerated rumor.

They had believed that Ian's secret would be revealed by the interrogation magic.

They thought Ian would spend his rest of life in the mana prison.

'All the rumors were true...?'

They couldn't believe it yet.

However, Ian was still standing at the room of the Tower Lord.

He already had passed interrogation magic.

"What is this?"

The giant sphere landed in front of Ian.

He didn't ask because he really didn't know its use.

It just became Ian's habit that pretending innocent child.

"It is called Mana Storage. It is one of important resource that powers most of objects in the Ivory Tower."

Mana elevator, air conditioner, communication orb and etc. The power source that must be needed for such magical devices, was called mana storage.

"At the moment, it doesn't have specific colors, but whenever it is charged with mana, it will glow as blue. Right there, can you see it?"

There was a mana storage where the Tower Lord pointed.

It wasn't just blue, it was a thick deep blue colored sphere.

The storage could contain the maximum of a 3rd class master's mana, and its color got thicker and deeper the more it got charged.

"Try to inject your mana to it."

"Everything?"

"You better. We want to see your limits."

"Same method as other objects?"

"Of course."

The Tower Lord answered clearly.

Ian stretched his arms carefully.

To inject mana in it.

'Should I humble myself, for this?'

Until now, every event had passed as Ian expected.
This was his last acting part.

'If I just fill it with amount of 2nd class master... '

At the moment, the Ivory Tower expecting Ian to achieve around 2nd class master to 3rd class beginner. If he just show that much amount of mana? It will relieve other Arch Mages, and Ian will get proper standing.

'It is the best choice I can think of.'

Minimized diversionary move, but still high enough authority.
It will allow Ian to live an easy life as he had done.

'Just like I have done since I have rewound time... '
With a manipulated atmosphere, he handed over the spy.
With an innocent child's face, he deceived the emperor.
With the stone heart potion, he had passed the interrogation.
And so many other situations he could remember.
And he could choose the same way this time.
He could act smartly to deceive others and change his surrounding in his favor.
It was simple.

'But... '

He didn't always act smartly.
He often solved problems emotionally.
Even he was living his second life.
Just like now.
His brain said no, but heart said yes.
Unsatisfactory.
Something made him feel uncomfortable.

'Why?'

He could find answer easily.
Every time when he acted emotionally, there were common points of it.

A source of unsatisfaction.

‘Magic.’

He could be patient for other things.
By considering his surroundings and situation.
He could shake his body like a scared child.
Or deceiving others with a lie.
However, whenever he related to magic, he couldn’t.
Whenever he had to use his magic, he became emotional.
Not only this life, but his former life as well.

‘For magic,’

Ian was just an 8th class mage.
He wasn’t a sage or leader who would be recorded in history.
The wisdom, philosophical, determination.
He might lack of those kinds.
However, for magic.

‘I can admit my other limitation. But for magic.’

No other mages in the Ivory Tower,
Nor other mages in the continent,
Nor other mages who existed.

‘There is no one higher than me in magic.’

His pride blinded his wisdom.
Ian poured every single mana he had.
Without hesitation,
Without moderation.

“Wh, what...?”

Suddenly, people looked at the storage.
The storage which were blue started to turn darker and thick.
From sky blue to blue,
From blue to deep dark blue.

From deep blue to black.

Eventually,

Crack! Cracckck! Cracckkk!

The surface of storage started to crack.

BANG-!

Soon it exploded with enormous noise.

There was not enough space to store extra mana.

Whirrrr – !

Soon, mana spread out to everywhere.

Its blue energy whirled like a tornado.

“Urgh!”

Mages covered their face from strong wind pressure.

Mana elevator started to up and down, out of control.

The light globes started to turn on and off rapidly.

Documents were blown, chairs were fallen down.

A few momenys later.

“...”

There were only silence.

No one could open their mouth easily.

Pant!... Pant!... Pant!

A rough breathing echoed through the tower.

It was Ian’s breathing who was suffering from the after shock.

He couldn’t stand any longer, so he sat down on the ground.

Still, he was watching the others surrounding him.

‘Look at their faces.’

Young mages who brought the storage,
Arch Mages who expected Ian as a 2nd class mage,
And even the Tower Lord, who seldom revealed his expression,
Their faces looked shocked.

“I, is it...”

Helene said unconsciously.

“Is it even possible...?”

Helene now started to collect shards of the storage.
She checked it's industrial standards.
It was meaningless, though.

‘How that kid...’

Other people just didn't express their shocked mind as Helene,
But they were very embarrassed.
The storage couldn't hold Ian's mana.
It supposed to store 3rd class master's mana.
That was the limit of the storage.
And Ian just destroyed by overcharging it.
What it would mean?

‘More than just 3rd class... master?’

At least 4th class beginner's mana quantity.
Furthermore, he didn't need to calculate formulas.
It was the very beginning of the twelfth Arch Mage's appearance.

CHAPTER 34

PEOPLE I NEED TO PROTECT (1)

The council of the Ivory Tower was busy these days.
Ian Page, Ian Page and Ian Page!
Today was no exception. Again, it was about Ian Page.
Several hours had already passed between the Arch Mages.

“So it was true. Everything was true! Furthermore, he has already managed to become 4th class. He has reached the same level as all of us except for you, Tower Lord.” said the middle aged Arch Mage, ‘Ronan’, excitedly.
They knew Ian contained enormous talent, but didn’t expect him to reach the same level as them. They were currently playing with fire.

“And are we trying to tame this monster? Shackle him? If we want to, we must start right now. Before he gets old. As soon as possible, before he becomes a monster which is out of control! The Academy, conducting to other regions, that is all bullshit!”

A duty which was fairly given to every mage.
Graduating the academy course, conducting another region for 5 years.
And Ronan was suggesting to let Ian be freed from such duties, and rather let him stay with the Arch Mages and try to make him stand on the Ivory Tower’s side.
Brainwashing or persuading, to tame Ian by any means necessary.

“We can’t excuse ourselves due to his age, can we?”

Not only Ronan, but most of the other Arch Mages thought that way.
Now, everyone was worried about Ian.
The unexplainable power that he contained.
He had already reached the 4th class.
And the potential within him.
“Although you used some inappropriate language, but what you spoke was reasonable.”

The Tower Lord supported Ronan.

“Putting Ian Page into the academy is a waste of time. Rather, other students will be caught in inferiority. Even we, Arch Mages are this concerned about him. Imagine what other newbie students would think.”

By his words, the Arch Mages nodded their heads.

Unlike when they were listening to Ronan’s speech, they reacted differently to the Tower Lord’s speech.

Because rather than just admitting their fears or haste on Ian as Ronan said, the excuse of ‘helping other newbie students’ feelings’ made them feel much more comfortable.

“As you already may know, the best value we need to aim is the symbol of the Ivory Tower. The more strong mages we have, the higher our fame will be.”

‘The symbol’ of the Ivory Tower.

‘The fame’ of the Ivory Tower.

It was the source of authority of the Ivory Tower.

The Tower Lord never missed that point.

“So, how about making an official announcement about Ian? Announcing that a new 4th class mage had appeared, and that he is now accepted as the 12th member of the Arch Mages. But considering Ian’s age and talent, the council decided to apply a special study course for Ian... I think this will be good enough.”

Basically, what he said had the same solution as Ronan did.

However, the excuse for it was totally different.

It didn’t reveal the fear and anxiousness in the hearts of the council members.

Rather, it made the council look like generous members who always supported their ‘precious’ young mage.

Through this announcement, they would grant a proper cause, excuse and social power.

“What do the rest of you think about my idea?”

The meeting went on for a while longer before it finished.

The announcement of the Ivory Tower was quickly spoken.

The appearance of the twelfth Arch Mage.

Furthermore, he broke the record of the youngest 4th class mage.

It had spread wide and quickly.

Not only to the royalty, but also to the nobles and merchants who operated big companies.

“Greetings sir! We came from Hybe merchant company. Our headquarters is located at the 8th street of the merchant area. The reason we came, is because our boss wants... Ah, please receive our present first.”

After the announcement, Ian's mansion was crowded.

Most of them were people who came from the nobles or merchants.

“Our boss sent this present for you. Don't feel any pressure on it, please. He just wants to show gratitude you. It's a indeed great news for the empire, isn't it?”

Nobles, merchants and people who recognized the new power.

All of them gathered in front of the mansion, while holding a bag or box on their hand.

What would be the reason of it?

“...Hybe merchant company, was it?”

“Yes, that's right! Please come to 8th street of mercha...”

“Hybe merchant company, I will forward this name to him.”

“Ah, Thank you! Thank you!”

The social power of the Arch Mage was unimaginable.

As a rank, higher than common nobles.

Ian arrived to the capital a few weeks ago.

He was literally a new fresh powerful man.

It was good to appeal themselves to Ian.

“Sigh...”

And It was Ledio's job.

He needed to greet every single one of them.

‘I can't understand it though.’

The parade of presents from merchants and nobles.

They were bribes rather than presents.
He thought Ian wouldn't receive them.
Because Ian was an honest, clean man? No way.

'Doesn't he already have enough money...?'

This was the reason of Ledio's doubt.
Just that. Ian already had enough money.
He had already received a bag of the finest jewels. Unless he was obsessed with money, there was no reason to receive those risky bribes. He expected Ian to refuse it.

'And he told me to receive everything. Why?'

Of course, no one would dare to go against an Arch Mage for receiving these 'presents'.
But still, it concerned Ledio.

"Is this Sir Ian Page's house?"

An endless tide of bribes.
Who is it this time?
Ledio looked up.
A old man, who looked like a servant of a house, was standing there.
He looked familiar to Ledio.

"Where do you come from?"

Ledio asked automatically.
He was getting used to it.

"The Head of Parker house, Adan Parker sent me..."
"H, house of Parker?"

Ledio shook his body.
Now he recognized the man.

'What an unfortunate coincidence.'

The mage who caused mana addiction to Ledio.
That bastard was the second son of Parker house.

At that moment, Ledio had contract between Parker house.

“Anything wrong about it?”

“N, nothing. You said house of Parker, right?”

The man was the servant of Parker house.

He didn't recognize Ledio.

“Please leave the present there.”

“Then, please introduce us well to sir Ian.”

If Ledio kept seeing him, the nightmare would be remembered again.

He sent him away with haste.

‘What a relief, sir Ian is backing me up.’

The more Ledio knew about Ian, the scarier Ian was.

Actually, he was a much more tremendous man than he had imagined.

Ledio knew Ian's talent is extraordinary. However, he didn't expect Ian to be granted the title of Arch Mage right after he visited the Ivory Tower. Who would have imagined?

‘Even Parker house had both power of noble and mage, they won't able to harm me.’

As Ledio thought, Parker house had two major powers: Noble and mage.

However, Ledio felt no fear about them.

Ian wasn't just an ordinary mage. He was a 12 years old Arch Mage. The title of Arch Mage itself already contained great power, furthermore, he had endless potential. And such a man was backing Ledio up. Even Parker house couldn't threaten Ledio anymore.

‘Seriously, what if he is a dragon?’

A childish image, an image that Douglas would have.

However, it actually suited Ian well. Even if one day Ian would say ‘I am actually a dragon.’ Ledio wouldn't be surprised about it.

‘Ha, what meaningless things am I imagining?’

While shaking his head, Ledio looked at his next guest.

“Whaaaaaat!”

He stood up immediately with a wide open mouth.

He was surprised hundreds of times more than when he heard the name, Parker.

“C, c, crown prince...?”

Ledio’s voice was full of embarrassment.

“Crown prince?”

“His Highness, crown prince?”

Ledio shouted too loud.

Every person who was standing in front of the mansion looked back.

From a distance, people were coming.

The second royal knights and blond handsome man.

It must be the crown prince.

“Welcome our crown prince!”

By the soldier’s shouting, everyone made a way and bowed down. Except one person, Ledio.

‘Please don’t say I need to greet him.’

At the moment, Ian wasn’t home.

In addition, Vanessa went out to buy some ingredients with the maids.

It was only Ledio who was in the mansion.

It drove him crazy.

‘The fuck...’

He wasn’t just a noble, but the crown prince.

He couldn’t stand still.

He quickly jumped off and he bowed down to the crown prince.

“C, crown prince, your highness! What brings you here?”

“Hmm? You...?”

With curious eyes, he looked at Ledio.
He must have expected Ian to come out.

“I, I am sir Ian’s alchem...”

“Ahah! Now I remember. You are the steward who came along with Ian, aren’t you?”

Ledio was caught in a serious problem.
Should he fix what the crown prince said?
Or just admit what the crown prince said?

“Th, that’s right! I am the steward of the house of Page, Ledio. I appreciate that you remember this tiny man! It will be an honor to my house!”

He chose the second option.
There were no benefits to indicate the error.
In addition, he was actually doing steward’s business at the moment.

“Then where is Ian? I came here to show gratitude to my sworn brother, Ian, for he was granted the title of Arch Mage.”

The crown prince emphasized the word, ‘sworn brother’.
To let everyone there hear it.

“S, sir Ian is not in the mansion.”

“Huh? Where did he go?”

“I don’t know the exact destination, but he just told me he’s going out to buy something. He promised me to come back before dinner time...”

He spoke any excuse he could imagine.
He was desperate.

“Hmmmm...”

The crown prince seemed disappointed.
However, it didn’t last long.

“Well, alright. It’s my fault for not sending him a message before.”

Every member of the second royal knight squad was surprised by his words. Suddenly visiting was the crown prince's bad hobby. But, did he just say it's his fault?

"Till the dinner time right? I can wait for that. I will wait inside. You, just keep doing your job."

Furthermore, he tapped Ledio's shoulder, and went into the mansion. The captain Oliver moved his eyebrow. It was quite rare for the captain to express his emotions.



'I better get paid back.'

The reason Ian ordered Ledio to receive every single presents.

He wanted to receive compensation for his misbehaviour.

If he acted smarter and calmed himself while injecting mana, he could receive many benefits from it.

However, he screwed it up to keep his pride of magic. So, he wanted to receive as many bribes as he could receive for now.

'Well it does make me feel good, though.'

However, he didn't regret it.

Even if it was his second life, he couldn't just give it up.

He couldn't stay behind in magic.

It was his only pride.

'Well, the rest of my life won't be easy though.'

By reading their well-packaged announcement, Ian could see what they were thinking. Ah, they must be afraid of Ian. A boy who came from nowhere suddenly reached them. They must be afraid of him.

'If I were them, I would freak out as well.'

Their pride of superiority.

The effort they had poured in.

Ian's appearance must have ruined all of those.

They must be desperate to tame him.

‘Now the problem is there must be enemies from now on.’

The appearance of the youngest 4th class mage.
As it shook the empire, there must be enemies generated.

“There are so many weird minded men in the world.”

The man who would envy Ian.
Or a group who wanted to draw him back.
What would they do they first?

‘My only weakness.’

Ian didn’t want to admit it.
However, he already knew his weak point.
A clear weak point that the enemy could see.

‘My mother’

That’s right. His mother was his only weakness. So, he needed to have a plan. A tool which provided safety on his mother, especially a tool that he can check her location and safety.

‘There is a such an item that can do the job.’

Ian finally arrived at the merchant region.
Precisely, at the centre of ‘The street of hextech.’
Ian chose the power of magic to protect his mother.
Especially, a device made by hextech engineers.
Of course, hextech device was mostly a life supporting item that helps the rich’s houses work. Firstly, their techniques weren’t good enough to build further levels of the item. Secondly, the Ivory Tower was supervising this industry with strict rules.

‘This technology won’t even be able to exist without the help of mages.’

Mage and hextech.
They had a very close relationship between each other.

The core resource of hextech was mana, of course.
They couldn't do experiments and manufacturing without the help of mana.
Then, who could supply it for them?

‘The Ivory Tower’

The mage's power was strong. Not just the strength of its destructive power. Not only alchemy, architecture, medical treatment, jewelcrafting, and hextech. It was related to every life in human civilization.

‘There are not many items my mother can use, but.’

A ‘communication orb’ will be enough for the job. Not one for civilians, but the high quality orb which is usually only used by the empire's communication post. Because of its powerful communication power, its price was enormous. Ian wanted such a level of communication orb.

‘I can re-earn this money later’

Even at this moment, money was coming.
The parade of presents to the mansion.
In addition, the jewels he left at the old Ivory Tower ruin.

Ring!

Ian opened one of the biggest hextech merchant shops.
The bell inside welcomed clients.

“Hey Vans! Bring the blueprint! Blueprint!”
“Y, yes sir!”

A crowded room.
At first, Ian could see engineers.
By appearance, they were doing similar jobs to blacksmiths. But the hextech engineering room wasn't full of muscle, heat and sweat. Rather, all of the hextech engineers had relatively thin bodies. Furthermore, the room temperature was controlled by hextech devices, so it had quite a pleasant temperature.

“Bring me three small sized mana storages. Fully charged ones!”

“Yes sir!”

Hundreds of various mana storages were there.
And uncompleted hextech devices.
A mana elevator, mana lantern, communication orb etcetera.
Parts of it were rolling on the ground.

‘Every time I visit here, I just realize how exotic a view it is.’

The shop’s name was ‘Thram’s workshop.’
It was the best ‘hextech workshop’ in the Greenriver Empire, and most of the hextech devices were supplied by them and managed by them.

“Move your ass!”

A boy who was busy with errands.
He murmured while passing Ian.
He leered at Ian as if saying ‘why are you blocking this busy area?’

“Vans you fool! Quick! What the heck are you doing?”
“I, I am coming! Senior!”

He couldn’t leer at Ian any longer.
With his senior’s shouting, he moved away quickly.
He must be a novice hextech engineer.

“How can I help you?”

CHAPTER 35

PEOPLE I NEED To PROTECT (2)

“What brings you here?”

Soon, someone called Ian.

This time, it wasn’t a boy, but a middle-aged man.

By his appearance, he looked to be the manager of the workshop.

‘Should I just show my magic and meet the head of the workshop immediately?’

Ian had thought for a while, but decided not to do it.

He came to make a big deal.

His every action would be gossiped about through the workshop.

He didn’t come to buy some cheap products.

In this case, he’d better greatly impress the engineers.

To do that, he should wait to reveal his title, Arch Mage, later at a proper time.

By doing that, it would be easier to silence engineers to spread rumors of him.

“I came here to buy some products.”

“What kind of products are you looking for?”

“Firstly, I want to see communication orbs.”

“Ah, come this way.”

The manager brought Ian to the shelf where low-level communication orbs with various colors were displayed. It was one of the most common orbs in use, and it was

usually used to help communication between floors.

“Are there any other products?”

“Higher ranks than this one costs quite a lot...”

“I’m looking for the orb that’s used for communication posts.”

“...?”

Suddenly, the manager doubted his ears.

Other engineers acted the same.

All of them leered at Ian.

‘What the hell is that mad boy saying?’

Their eyes were saying that.

Not just through their eyes, but also through their mouths,

“Phhhff! What a funny jerk.”

“What the heck did he want to buy?”

“Yo, Vans, what are you doing? Help our freaking rich customer, Ha ha!”

Their voices were full of ridicule. They reacted a little bit too much, but it was a natural reaction. There were no other reasons. The orb was extremely expensive.

“Enough! How rude!”

The manager kept his manners. He didn’t believe the boy would be able to afford the high quality communication orb, though. But he wore clothes of nobles.

“I apologize, the orb you want is quite hard to purchase.”

“Is it forbidden?”

“No it’s not. Firstly, you may not be able to afford the product. Furthermore, you need to be granted approval from the Ivory Tower...”

“Then, I will buy it.”

With confidence, Ian put his bag on the floor.

It seemed like it’s full of money.

‘Come on.’

Although the bag looked full, but it won’t be enough, still. Even if the bag was full of gold coins, it wasn’t enough to buy a high quality communication orb. Unless he wanted to buy shards of broken communication orbs.

‘He doesn’t listen.’

The manager started to get upset.

He already told Ian twice that he wouldn’t be able to afford it.

Furthermore, the boy didn’t speak like nobles at all.

He decided to kick him out.

“Sigh, sir? As I told you...”

The manager spoke with an upset voice.

Regardless, Ian started to open the bag.

“I don’t know how many gold coins are in there, but if it won’t be enough...”

“It’s not gold coins.”

“To buy a high-quality communication orb..... huh?”

Soon, Ian spread contents to the floor of the workshop. It wasn’t just gold coins. Instead, it was jewels, which were a million times more expensive per weight unit, compared to the gold coins.

“Uh... HUH?”

Not just ordinary engineers, but the manager was lost as to what to say.

They doubted their ears at the beginning, but now they doubted their eyes. Is it even real?

“It’s jewels.”

“What...”

“The finest quality.”

“F, finest...”

No doubt about its quality.

Only a few jewels were qualified as the finest.

A jewel that was shaped by mana-craft.

Other normal jewels had no chance to even compare with it.

Even a person who had no idea about jewels would recognize its difference immediately.

Unique shape, preciousness, perfect hardness.

“Will it be insufficient?”

The manager started to calculate quickly.

Insufficient? For the high-level communication orb?

The manager couldn’t dare to decide.

It was hard to estimate the price of those jewels, and most of all, he didn’t know the exact value of pairs of high-level communication orbs. He didn’t have the authority to sell it.

“T, That is...”

But from now on, two things became clear now.

The boy in front of him wasn't a fool, and didn't come to the workshop to trick them. And he came to the workshop, to buy the communication orb, seriously.

“W, would you please wait for a moment? I can't simply decide to sell the product...”

It must be.

It was a huge scale of business.

Ian nodded silently.

“Ch, chief!”

After a while,

The engineers seemed nervous by some man's appearance.

He looked like a man who was about to become middle-aged.

It must be the chief engineer, 'Thram.'

'Black hair?'

Thram had black hair, which was quite a rare case in the continent.

In his former life Ian didn't know it because Thram's hair had turned white. So this time, Ian was quite surprised about it. It was one of the entertaining facts of time traveling.

“Excuse me.”

Thram slowly investigated the jewels.

He must be good at it.

“Hmm.”

Thram figured out those jewels were real.

While looking at Ian, he said.

“First, high-level communication can’t be sold without permission from the Ivory Tower. And in most cases, they don’t. Not because of the price, it is nearly impossible to sell.”

What he said was right.

Except communication posts, which was held by the co-operation between Royalty, the Ivory Tower and the land lord, most people couldn’t buy it and didn’t even know of its existence. Furthermore, unlike private communication orbs, it required enormous mana to operate. Hence, there were many restrictions about the product.

“Furthermore, as I know, there were only quite a few number of men or merchants who can afford to buy it. So, I want you to identify yourself. It seemed you are a messenger of someone, and if your master is not trustworthy, I would regard these jewels as stolen treasures.”

Thram even suspected the source of the jewels.

In fact, honestly, it was stolen treasures.

However, Ian couldn’t just admit it.

Fortunately, Ian had the proper title to be trusted.

“Firstly, I will give you permission to sell it.”

“...What would that mean?”

Instead of an answer, Ian lightly made a gesture in the air.

Soon, jewels on the ground started to levitate.

It was obviously the power of magic.

“Magic...?”

It looked like simple magic. However, levitating magic wasn't an easy spell at all. Rather, it was a high-level magic. Thram knew it very well. As a engineer of hextech, he knew most of magical theory.

'Perhaps.'

A young aged boy like Ian, supposed to be waiting for academy entrance, or just few years past after entrance. However, did he show off high-level magic? Thram can imagine only one such person. A few days ago, the Ivory Tower announced the appearance of a new Arch Mage, the youngest in their history, Ian Page. He was introduced as 12 years old.

"A, are you that...?"

"I think you found the right person."

"Whaaattt!"

Thram freaked out as if he saw a ghost.

"Please forgive my rudeness!"

Usually young low class mages used to come and order these products. Even the chief engineer wouldn't be able to meet Arch Mages easily. They were just mysterious men who sent orders and permissions from high up.

"Please forgive me...!"

What a disastrous situation it was?

Not just a mage, but an Arch Mage.

What was he doing in here, in the workshop?

"No pressure. I understand you wouldn't be able to recognize me."

While smiling, Ian re-gathered the jewels.

Of course, by magic, easily.

Then he stretched his right hand.

“Nice to meet you. Ian Page.”

“M, my name is Thram, the chief engineer of this workshop! I’m honored to meet you!”

Thram grabbed Ian’s hand with two hands.

Ian was a 4th class mage.

His age wasn’t important at all.

Those hextech engineers must have acted rudely to him.

This workshop could possibly be shut down by Ian’s order.

“So now, may I look around for communication orbs?”

“Of course. Please, follow me.”

With Thram’s sincere guidance, Ian went down to the basement.

And the other engineers’ faces turned pale.

“Wh, what is going on?”

“It was magic, right?”

“Wait... Ian Page?”

“A new Arch Mage...”

Now the situation was crystal clear to the workers.

“W, we are screwed.”

Not just the hextech engineers,

“...did I sigh?”

The manager slowly recalled his actions to Ian.

"I, I..."

On the other hand, the youngest member of the workshop, Vans, he was about cry.

He remembered that he said to Ian 'move your ass'.

Vans started to regret, 'Why did I act like that? Am I going to be executed?'

Each member's memories of their action to Ian were brought back in rapid succession.

'They would remain silent.'

The most effective method of preventing rumors was to use threats.

Ian just made a simple, but effective threat to the engineers.

Even in the Ivory Tower, only Arch Mages would be informed about the purchase of communication orbs. If this information spread though, Ian wouldn't suspect this workshop as the source of it, but would not be sure about other Arch Mages' reaction. They may react sensitively. A lot.

'This is one of the benefits of the Ivory Tower.'

To people, the Ivory Tower was a symbol of respect and fear.

Its own existence would silence the engineers' mouths effectively.

'It is going well.'

Instead of the bag of jewels, Ian was holding a simple iron cage. It contained a pair of high quality communication orbs, and unlike its own ordinary appearance, the container was an invincible box, which was shielded with several protection spells.

'For my mother's protection.'

Ian spent an enormous amount of money for these orbs. It might cause several problems later. However, Ian was ready to take the burdens. Before anything, Ian wanted to prepare a safety net for his mother. Hence, Ian was satisfied.

'But how should I hand this over to her?'

A big high quality communication orb.

It was as big as two fists of a fully grown male.

It wouldn't be easy to make into a trinket. What about staff form?

'But she is still too young to use a staff.'

It would make sense if she was a mage, but she wasn't, and still young.

30 years old, actually, she hadn't passed her birthday yet, so she was 29 years old.

She was still young.

"Hmm."

However, he couldn't just give it away to her as original form.

She had to bring it everywhere. With this big marble shape, it might be easily lost and forgotten. He must do something about it.

'If I told her its price, she wouldn't miss it though.'

But instead, she would lose her mind.

She would serve the orb as higher than herself.

Ian must not tell her the price.

'Let's think slowly. Slowly'

Ian looked at the sky.

The sky that was once clear blue, now started to get dark. He promised his mother to come back before dinner, he must hurry to keep his promise.

'She promised me to make her red bean pie.'

Vanessa's 'Special Red Bean Pie.'

The food that Ian had missed the most.

In his former life, no cooks were able to make the same taste as hers. Even simply imagining it made his mouth begin to water.

‘I’d better not run with my bare feet this time.’

Red bean pie was best when it was hot.

If Ian walked, chilled pie would await him.

“Fly.”

With a small voice, Ian cast his spell.

A spell that allows humans to fly.

But it only allowed humans to fly for 30 seconds.

Since it drained a huge amount of mana and flying speed was too slow, this spell wasn’t used commonly. However, with a combination of several spells, it had its own use.

“Up.”

Soon, Ian’s body rose straight into the sky. Before the spell’s effect ended, he reached to the castle wall’s height. He could see the mansion over the horizon.

‘Wind.’

Continuously, Ian casted basic wind magic. It was the basic of the basics, but its power could be enhanced greatly, depending on the mage’s skill. And Ian was good enough to do it. Monstrous wind soon blew Ian away in the direction of the mansion.

Whiiiiinnnnngg!

With a ten times faster speed than walking, Ian’s body headed to the mansion. More accurately, Ian’s body was flying and about to smash the ground. Even at this moment, Ian was holding the container as if he was carrying a baby.

“Feather fall.”

As always, he landed with the feather fall spell.

It slowed down Ian's body, which was about to smash into the mansion.

His landing direction was exactly the front door of the mansion.

“Hmm?”

Many people were gathering around the mansion.

People wouldn't bring their presents until night.

Ian focused his mana on his eyes.

‘Knights?’

Silver colored copes, they must be the second royal knight order.

Which were knights who were supposed to guard the crown prince.

Tap!

As planned, Ian landed at the front door.

Of course, he drew the attention of the knights.

Some of them were surprised and drew their sword by instinct.

“Sir Ian...?”

A young knight recognized him.

Ian asked to him.

“Did his highness the crown prince come to my house?”

“Ah, yes! He did. You'd better hurry. He had waited for a while.”

With the young knight's word, Ian was uncomfortable.

Although he had helped Ian and treated him very well recently, he was an incomplete

man. He might act violently, due to his long waiting time.

‘Please not.’

Would he harm Ian’s mother?

If that’s what happening in there, it was not good.

In that case, Ian would gladly choose to become a traitor.

With a determined mind, Ian ran into the mansion.

‘Hmm?’

At the entrance aisle of the mansion,

The captain Oliver was guarding the aisle.

Even he was alone, he never lost his carefulness.

By recognizing someone’s approach, he raised his head.

It was a young boy, Ian Page.

‘What is it?’

Oliver felt a dangerous aura from the boy.

It was weak, but he was revealing murderous intention.

Oliver couldn’t let him in and visit the crown prince like that.

“Stop please.”

Now, Ian had higher rank than Oliver.

With proper manners, he blocked Ian’s way.

He was at least two times taller than Ian.

But still, a stormy atmosphere continued.

“Why are you blocking me?”

Ian lowly growled.

Oliver’s blocking made him feel more nervous.

Was there really something bad going in there?

‘Come on, wasn’t he just little boy? But look at his aura...’

A dangerous aura that was spreading from his small body.

Murderous intention, and trembling mana.

It was getting bigger.

Tap

Oliver moved his hand to drew his sword.

Ian also raised his mana.

The calm before a storm.

And all of a sudden...

CHAPTER 36

PEOPLE I NEED TO PROTECT (3)

The calm before the storm. A voice abruptly echoed out, "Captain!"

It was the young knight who was standing outside. The one who recognized Ian first, he came into the mansion in a hurry.

"The food ingredients that the cooks had requested have finally..."

The knight couldn't continue his report.

"Arrived... outside..."

He felt the tension between Oliver and Ian.

"Cook? Food ingredients? What is going on?"

Ian couldn't understand the knight's report.

All of sudden, did he just say cook and food ingredients?

"Uh... The crown prince called the royal cooks. But the food ingredients in the mansion weren't enough, and extra ingredients just arrived from the palace..."

The knight reported with nervous eyes.

After the report, Ian drew back his mana.

In addition, his murderous aura had stopped as well.

"So, may I let them in?"

The crown prince ordered the ingredients by himself.

However, the knight asked permission from Ian.

The previous tension was still affecting him.

"...Yes you may."

After Ian stopped his aggressive attitude, Oliver took off his right hand from the sheath. Also, he unblocked the path.

“My apologies. I misunderstood the situation.”

Then, Ian passed Oliver.

Oliver looked at Ian’s back with silence.

‘Misunderstanding, huh?’

Oliver could guess what kind of misunderstanding Ian had.

However, the murderous aura, aggressive attitude, those were not a 12 years old child’s.

‘Could I slice him down?’

During the time he confronted Ian,
That’s what Oliver only had thought.
If he would bet, which side would he choose?
The imperial sword master, Oliver’s sword?
Or the 4th class Arch Mage, Ian’s magic?

‘I would bet on magic.’

Oliver smiled with bitterness.
A grievous, cruel fact.
He couldn’t even defeat the young boy.

‘I must be stronger than now.’

To keep the promise with the current emperor.
The promise that he would protect the crown prince.
To protect the crown prince.
Oliver followed Ian to guard the crown prince.

“Is it true? Mrs. Page?”

Ian was heading to the dinner hall of the mansion.

From there, he could hear voices.

“Is he truly like this?”

“He always asked me to bake it for him...”

The first voice was the crown prince, followed by Vanessa.

The crown prince was sitting at the huge table alone.

In front of him, there was red bean pie.

It seemed he only had one bite.

“Huh! I can’t understand it. It tastes like baked mud, why does he like... Maybe he used to live in hard circumstances?”

Severe criticism was coming out of the crown prince’s mouth.

He shook his head as he couldn’t understand Ian’s tastes.

“I tried it because of your sincerity, but...”

Eventually, the crown prince dropped his fork and knife on the table.

Then, he shouted to the kitchen.

“How long will it take for the food to be ready?”

With his shout, a young royal cook ran out full of sweat. He was obviously embarrassed.

“Y, your majesty! The extra ingredients just had arrived. It won’t take long from now on. Please wait for a min...”

“Yet?”

“W, we will serve your food very soon!”

“Hmmm...”

The crown prince started to feel uncomfortable.

He closed his eyes and started to think.

Wouldn’t he lose his magnificence if he kept tolerating their actions?

‘No, No.’

If the cook was a noble or an Ivory Tower member, he would show him his wrath. However, he was just an ordinary cook. To become a successful king, the king must

show mercy to his people, shouldn't he? The crown prince recalled some quote from his memory. He couldn't remember which book it was from though.

"Fine. But you should bring us the best quality meal. I want to impress my brother in oath, Ian, and his mother with the best kind of food that they haven't ever experienced before. Do you understand?"

"I, I will serve the best of best!"

"Fine. I trust you. Go on."

After turning the cook back, the crown prince looked at the red bean pie again. What kind of people could live on with such pathetic food? And Ian had grown while eating this pie? His eyes were betraying his thoughts.

"Your highness."

Ian, who was waiting, quickly entered the dinner hall. If he waited any longer, the crown prince might have forbidden red bean pie in the country.

"Oh! Look who is here! Archmage of the Ivory Tower, Ian Page!"

The crown prince welcomed him warmly.

Ian was a bit embarrassed.

Ian felt sorry for him, that Ian was almost trying to kill him.

'Well, it's better than having a bad relationship with him.'

With optimistic thinking, Ian bowed his head.

"I heard you were waiting for me for long."

"Yes. It was a bit long."

"I apologize to you, highness."

"No, you don't need to feel sorry for that, but please don't tell me you already had your dinner, did you? Then you may have to feel sorry for me..."

Furthermore, now he joked with Ian.

Did he become mad?

Maybe thanks to mother's red bean pie?

Ian was confused.

“How about you sit down there? As well as Mrs. Page. Dinner will be ready soon. I guarantee you would be surprised! Wow I never knew there is such delicious food in the world! Like this. Ha ha!”

While saying that, the crown prince tapped the red bean pie dish. It was a silent order to the maids.

“Excuse me.”

“Mhmm.”

A maid quickly took away the red bean pie.
And Ian was looking at it with sorrowful eyes.
He flew to the mansion to eat that pie.
Ian barely managed his mind to drive away the sadness.
While he wasn’t paying attention, Oliver was next to the crown prince.

“Your highness, did you bring a present for Ian?”

Oliver whispered to the crown prince.
Maybe there was a specific reason that he visited the mansion.

“Ahh! I almost forgot about it.”

As he now remembered, he clapped his hands.
After stretching his neck, he looked at Ian.

“Hmm! I came to visit your house for a simple reason. I heard the announcement that you became an archmage. So, I came here to celebrate it face to face. I forgot to send a message before coming here, but as you know, our relationship is special, isn’t it?”

“I thank yo...”

“Uhuh, it’s not the time for gratitude yet. I am the crown prince, I never celebrate someone without any presents, do I? You don’t know me yet.”

With his hand gesture, maids started to move. Soon, they brought the box that was sealed with silk, and its size and sound gave a hint to Ian that it is not just money or a treasure.

“Open it. It wasn’t easy to bring it here.”

Wasn’t easy? What could it be?

After unwrapping the silk, Ian looked at its content.

There was a small flask in the wooden box.

‘A liquid?’

The inside of the flask was filled with a liquid.

Did he bring the royal special elixir?

If that’s so, Ian would accept it without any hesitation.

It was one of Ian’s targets.

“What is this, your majesty?”

Ian asked the crown prince like an innocent child.

“It is called elixir, have you heard about it?

“Yes, I know it.”

“Then, you would know what it does. It is a precious elixir that was inherited through royalty.”

As Ian expected.

“Especially, this one, even I’m only able to drink it once per year.”

Even the lowest level of royal mastery elixir would help Ian greatly. It was a secret key of the previous emperor’s long life. Without mana enhancement, there was nothing bad about it. Furthermore, did he just say even he could drink it only once per year? It must be a high level elixir.

“To increase your growth rate, I especially bring it for you. Not in the name of my father, but I’m giving it to you as my first present. So please drink it without hesitation.”

Yes, Ian wouldn’t hesitate anyway.

Soon, Ian opened the cap.

Red colored liquid tempted Ian with a dim smell.

From deep inside of his body, his instinct forced him to drink it.

“Come on, quick.”

With proud eyes, the crown prince pressed Ian to drink it.
Ian brought the lid to his lips.

“...”

Suddenly, he had stopped for a moment, then took his lips away.

A bad memory had come.

The moment he was poisoned by the emperor, Ragnar.

It wasn't that much difference from that time.

Royalty, Royalty's visiting, and liquid that was suggested from the emperor.

‘It shouldn't be poisoned.’

Yes. Ian also knew his thoughts were paranoid. It was a totally different situation. The crown prince wasn't brave and cold enough to murder him in front of many people. In addition, normal poison wouldn't be able to kill a mage. Furthermore, the poison that Ragnar brought 30 years later mustn't exist yet.

‘Also, elixir is of good quality.’

The status of elixir calmed Ian down.

Elixirs were brewed through a very sensitive and careful process. If tiny unexpected materials are mixed in it, it lost its unique colors and scent. The color became dark and the smell became bad.

“Hew.”

Ian slowly calmed down his mind.

The desire that he felt when he smelled its scent at first, and the bad memory of his former life.

After he erased both negative thoughts, his insightfulness returned.

‘It should be a great present for mother.’

The key of the previous emperors' long life.

The royal mastery elixir was the fundamental factor of it.

Of course, Ian's mana can be enhanced greatly, but he also couldn't forget about his

mother.

‘I can’t do it for now.’

The crown prince’s eyes were full of pride and expectation. Furthermore, the eyes of his mother. She didn’t know about elixir well, but she was happy that her son received a great present.

‘No choice.’

He chose to fulfill the crown prince’s expectation.
Ian drank it.

gulp

Elixirs had their own unique slimy taste.
It wasn’t tasty at all. It was bitter.
Other elixirs and medicine were no exception.
However, its effect on Ian’s body was definitely different to his former body.
His body was young enough to absorb most of its power.

Beat! Beat! Beat!

Mana heart, actually, his whole heart started beating greatly.
His blood circulated much faster than usual.
And through the blood, a giant amount of mana had flown.
His body started to become hot.
On the other hand, his mind was crystal clear.

“Hwoooooo!”

Ian exhaled his warm breath.
The power of an elixir, and a body that takes its power, they did their own work at best.

“I, Ian?”

With Ian’s appearance, Vanessa started to worry.
On the other hand the crown prince’s eyes were full of expectation.
That reaction, he knew it well since he had drank it before.

The elixir was working perfectly.

“Hwooo...!”

Ian's body was getting stable.

Including his shaking heart, blood, mana and his burning temperature.

“Hwoooooooooo...!”

Ian spit out his last hot breath.

He could feel that his body was full of sweat.

“How is it? Can you feel any difference?”

The crown prince asked with an excited voice.

Did he just ask Ian if he can feel it?

‘Definitely’

His mana pool hadn't increased. Each elixir had its own type and characteristics. However, Ian could feel one big difference. His ‘mana regeneration’ had increased greatly.

‘Similar to the Mogrian ring.’

The low level artifact that increased the mana heart's activity.

The elixir fell into same category.

‘More accurately, around half the amount of the Mogrian ring.’

It was more than he had expected. Especially the fact that the characteristics of his body itself had changed made him satisfied. It was a good result from the collaboration between a good elixir and a young age.

“Y, you don't like it?”

The crown prince started to feel nervous as Ian didn't show any reaction.

Ian looked at the crown prince's face.

‘I had thought of him as just a useless idiot.’

A tool that made a connection between Ian and the emperor.

After that, a useless man in the empire.

Ian used to consider the crown prince just like that.

Rascal, Idiot, Man of inferiority, Naughty.

Many nicknames and points of view for the crown prince, Hayden.

Ian also had agreed with that.

‘Well, those words are kind of true though.’

Though he wasn’t a case that ‘in fact, he was a kind and diligent prince’.

However, he was a better man than Ian thought.

‘I can see some kind of use in him.’

But of course, ‘just a little bit better’ than Ian had thought.

“HaHaHa!”

The crown prince’s laughter was spread to the streets.

The supper at Ian’s mansion had finished well.

Ian’s reaction to the crown prince’s first present was good, and the meal was outstanding.

In addition, they had talked a lot and left with peace.

Perfect, indeed.

“Very good. I feel very good!”

The crown prince was going back to the palace through the night street

The crown prince looked especially happy.

As usual, he didn’t miss to drink wines, and the crown prince drank most of them. Ian was too young, and Vanessa didn’t drink. That was the reason he became hyped.

“Your highness.”

The captain Oliver, who was standing next to the crown prince silently, opened his mouth.

“Are you okay with it?”

“Hmm? What?”

“It’s only allowed to royalty. If our emperor highness hears that you gave it as present...”

Royalty mastery elixir. Its recipe and brew process was strictly forbidden to expose. Especially the elixir he gave to Ian was only allowed to the emperor and the crown prince. The crown prince just broke the law that was kept for hundreds years.

“Ahh, that’s no problem at all. It was my father who told me to draw Ian to my side by any means necessary. I just followed my father’s advice, that’s all I did.”

There must be a limitation for ‘necessary.’ However, the crown prince was literally using any kind of methods he knew.

“Or are you displeased, because I didn’t give it to you first...”

With teasing eye, the crown prince looked at Oliver.

“Not at all.”

“You should have told me if that is so.”

“Your Highness.”

“HaHa! I’m just joking. Come on. I have my rights to joke, don’t I?”

He had drunk a lot. Even Oliver who had served him for 12 years, only rarely experienced the crown prince’s jokes. He used to joke once, only while he was very young. At some point, he stopped making jokes.

“I feel sorry for you, but I should draw him to my side. You and your knight order can’t smash those arrogant Ivory Tower bastard’s noses, can you?”

The crown prince wasn’t looking down on the knight orders.

It was just reality.

“However, that boy may be able to do it, might he not? He became an Archmage as soon as he entered the ivory tower.”

Oliver couldn’t deny it.

The boy was a mage who never existed in history with such talent. If he managed to

overcome the diversions from his surroundings, he would become the greatest mage of the Ivory Tower in history with ease.

“We will see. The day he gives the Ivory Tower to me! I will wipe all the mages who made me feel uncomfortable out! Especially the tower lord who kept following Ragnar, bastard! You tell me if any of them made you feel bad!”

However, Oliver couldn’t agree with the crown prince’s plan.

Oliver strongly doubted the possibility.

Remembering what he showed in the mansion.

He was targeting the crown prince.

Although he had misunderstood, he was a dangerous man.

Would it be possible to make such a monster stand on his side?

“And also...”

While the crown prince was about to speak more,

The gate of the royal palace was visible.

In addition, there were more than just gates over there.

A boy and his followers were coming out from the royal palace.

“Ragnar?”

The crown prince’s face instantly turned ugly.

The 5th prince, Ragnar, and the 5th royal prince guards.

The people who he hated most.

“Brother?”

Ragnar never called him as ‘highness’. Just like other common non-noble children, he called him as ‘brother’. It was tolerable if they were very friendly, however the crown prince had no good relationship with any of the other princes, rather they were enemies. Ragnar insulted him with his intention.

“It is quite late, where have you been?”

“Then what about you, where are you sneaking off to?”

“Same as usual. Check how other people’s lives are. In addition, breathing some fresh air. I will come back soon, so you don’t need to worry about me.”

“Humph! I don’t care about you.”

Ragnar replied to the crown prince with a smiling face.
The crown prince wanted to punch his face.

“Well then, see you later, brother”
“Whatever.”

With a single meeting with the prince, the crown prince felt uncomfortable. While caught in a fury, he rushed into the royal palace. The second royal knight followed him with haste.

“Your Highness prince.”

Only one man, the captain Oliver was left alone and spoke to Ragnar.

“He is his Highness the crown prince. By law of royal manners, please call him with the proper title.”

He requested with manners, but it was criticism. One of the fifth royal knights came and tried to manage the situation.

“Hey, Oliver. They are brothers, please try not to ruin their friendly relationship.”

The captain of the guard, royal knight, ‘Caleo.’
He used to train together with Oliver.

“I understand. The best swordsman is serving the idiot... Khmm! I mean, the crown prince, so you may have many problems to deal with. I understand, but.”

As he misspoke, Caleo called the crown prince as ‘idiot’. And the other guards were laughing silently. Their reaction was natural.

“How dare you say something like that to his Highness the prince...”

“Those who insult nobles will be executed in instant, but.”

“...What?”

Slash!

It happened within the blink of an eye.

None of the men recognized what just happened.
They just knew that Oliver drew his sword, and his speed was uncatchable.
And they didn't recognize it for a moment.
Furthermore,

“For insulting royalty.”

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash!

“Will be cut into 5 pieces from arms and legs to head.”

Oliver's voice was serious and brought terror.
And his intention was soon relayed to the others.

drop drop... drop.

The first thing that had fallen was the beard. Caleo had grown it to follow the recent trend, but now it had been cut and dropped. Furthermore, his leather mail started to fall from arms and legs continuously. If Oliver slashed a little bit deeper, Caleo's arms and legs would've been cut into pieces.

“Yi... yikes!”

In reality, only his beard and armor had been cut.
However, in Caleo's mind, he had already lost his body parts.

He was caught in an illusion that he had been cut into pieces.
Caleo bumped his butt on the ground while shaking his body.
Actually, Oliver's sword touched Caleo's skin.
Although he didn't bleed, Oliver actually touched it with his sword.

“Please remember, sir Caleo.”

After sheathing his sword, Oliver looked at Ragnar.
Then, he bowed his head with proper manners.
As if nothing had happened.

“Then, have a safe travel.”

CHAPTER 37

SOMETIMES THE STICK IS BETTER THAN THE CARROT (1)

(Tell me the truth. It's an expensive one, isn't it?)

Vanessa spoke through the communication orb.
While hiding his nervousness, he replied naturally.

"No way, mom. If you can't believe me, check the gold coins that the emperor highness had given to me. Except for the few coins we have used, there would be no difference at all."

Of course there wasn't.
Ian bought the orb with jewels.

(Really? Hmm it is really surprising though. Other communicative orbs I have seen in this mansion and the province castle, they only allowed me to communicate within a close area. But this... how?)

It was quite a natural reaction.
Ian was heading to the ivory tower at the moment.
Even if he was quite far from her, the communication was working.
According to her experience, it was impossible.

"I did some tricks on it."
(C, can you even do such things?)
"You don't say. I'm a mage."
(But...)
"Mages are always the best."

Hmm, didn't Ian say something similar before?
Whatever, Ian changed the topic.

“Anyway, please always keep it safe.”
(But this size... is a bit too big, my dear.)
“I will try to fix it to reduce its size soon.”
(It’s too big, isn’t it?)
“Well, I’ll try to find a way.”

Yet, Ian couldn’t decide the shape of the orb for his mother. The appearance wouldn’t be the problem. There were not that many visual differences between Ian’s orb and other ordinary orbs. So he just needed to consider its portable factor.

‘But I can’t think of any decent ideas for it.’

And that was the problem. He couldn’t think of any.
A ‘portable design’ of the orb.
He should visit the workshop later to get some advice.

“And wherever you go, please go with guard soldiers. Not just you alone, nor just with maids. Please. And this is the order of the crown prince, not just my advice, you know right?”

The crown prince was more useful than Ian had thought. At first, he complimented Vanessa’s beauty for hours. Ian had worried for a while that he might be interested in her, but he wasn’t. Instead, he sent a few guards for Vanessa’s body guards.

‘Whenever I see Mrs. Page, she reminds me of my passed away mother. She was very beautiful. As you can see from my face. Haha! But, hmm, you... may look more like your father.’

Still, the crown prince’s word remained in Ian’s heart.
Ian used to worry about it when he was young in his former life.
Why didn’t I inherit my mother’s beauty?
The crown prince’s words reminded him about it.

‘Ah, but there’s nothing wrong or bad about it. You may grow up as a cool guy, later. Hahaha!’

With his continuous jokes, even his mother had laughed.
Even Ian had lived much longer than ordinary people. But since the crown prince had given his bodyguards to his mother, Ian forcefully calmed himself. Royal bodyguards

weren't just well physically trained soldiers, but trained well mentally. They were much more trustworthy compared to mercenaries.

(Ok ok, you little mage. Why did he become so chatty after he became a mage? Where did those characteristics come from? The crown prince said he may be similar to his father. Was my husband chatty though?)

"Mom..."

Vanessa's voice had stopped.

It seemed she left her room without the communication orb.

"Sigh..."

Ian disconnected the orb's mana.

While he was sighing, his lips were smiling.

Compared to when she was a kitchen maid, she had changed dramatically. Now she wasn't depressed, but confident. She looked more comfortable and brighter.

'Circumstances and environment are important for a human, indeed.'

No one now ordered her around and looked down her.

Her only son became a powerful man one day.

Ledio, who is usually bright and funny whenever he felt comfortable.

Douglas, who acted like a child, unlike Ian and many other facts might have affected her.

'By the way.'

Ian swung his staff with the orb hanging on it. Unlike his mother's orb, his orb was already fixed into staff form. There were absolutely no people in the empire who would hold doubts about a mage who brought his staff.

'Private lesson of the Ivory Tower, huh?'

Today was the entrance day of the magic academy.

Of course Ian wouldn't go to the academy. He would be sent straight to the Ivory Tower and receive private lessons from Archmages. Well, they called them 'private lessons', but they would try to convince him to stand with the Ivory Tower.

“Oh. Academy.”

While Ian walked far, he could see the academy.
He refused to use a carriage today.
He wanted to see the academy slowly.

‘In my former life, I was there as well.’

From a distance, Ian could see the outer meeting area of the academy.
There were kids who called to the mages, from every side of the empire.
Actually, there were only six kids from every side of the empire.

‘My academy class mates.’

They were Ian’s classmates.
Although not this time, but in his former life.

‘Haldis, Kaldaram, Jayjay, Roana.’

Especially those four were Ian’s best friends.
They all got killed during the first war, though.

‘This time, please live long.’

He decided to say hello to them soon. Although it won’t be easy to became a close friend like in his former life, but he would try his best. It made him feel happy.

“S, sir Ian Page?”

From the Ivory Tower, a man with a robe ran into him.
It was the mage who guided Ian in a rude manner when Ian page visited the Ivory Tower for the first time.

“We meet again.”
“H, haha. H, hello.”

While recalling his misbehavior a few days before, he made an awkward smile.
With his awkward gentle manner, he continued his words.

“I, I am Parvon Parker, who is ordered to serve you as a support mage for this year. Pleased to meet you, sir!”

A support mage. They were ‘errand boy of the Ivory Tower’ for archmages. They selected from newbie official mages by volunteering or by compulsory service, and they were changed for every year.

“I had received the report. Thank you for your help.”

“T, this way! I will guide you, sir.”

Parvon volunteered to serve Ian as a support mage.

The reason was simple. By any means necessary, he needed to turn Ian’s bad first impression of him.

“This is about my future mage life!”

Until he met Ian, his life was easy and straightforward. He was born as the second son of a powerful house, and his magical talent was confirmed. He achieved 2nd class when he about to graduate the academy, and conducting another region had ended in just one year, with great luck.

‘I need to fix this. I MUST!’

If more than two potential mages were found in the conducted region, a privilege was given to the conducting mage, to finish his conducting mission earlier than usual. To motivate other conducting mages to do their best for mana testing on children. It only happened once per 50 years, though.

‘Come on, I can’t ruin my perfect career!’

However, that special event had happened in the ‘Soyten Province.’ Three potential mages were found. And it was the place where Parvon had conducted, so by the tradition of the Ivory Tower, he had received an official mage title.

“Uhm, Sir Ian.”

“Yes, Mr. Parker?”

“Y, you don’t need to call me like that, sir! Just call me Parvon.”

“I prefer this way.”

It used to be a perfect life.
A life that had been stable.
But that life had been ruined by slipping up just once.
He left a bad impression on an Archmage.

“P, please forgive my misbehavior...”

He had to change his fate.
His twisted life needed to be fixed.
Even if it would be at the cost of being Ian’s dog, ‘Parvon Parker’ was ready for that.

“I sincerely apologize for...”
“Ah, that one? I’m okay with it.”
“A, are you?”

Parvon’s face turned bright quickly.
On his face, Ian warned him lightly.

“You can do better from now on.”
“O, of course sir! I’ll serve you with my best!”

Those two had entered to the ground floor of the ivory tower.
As before, Ian stepped onto the golden disk, the disk for Archmages.
Suddenly all mages looked at Ian.
Their eyes were full of confusion.

“Please take this. It will lead you to the 19th floor, the sanctuary of Archmages.”

After that, Parvon quickly stepped onto the public elevator of the Ivory Tower. It was violet instead of gold.

Whirrrr-

Soon, the golden elevator started to raise.
Simultaneously, other mages now recognized the little boy’s identity.
Their eyes were now full of respect, jealousy and envy of Ian.
A natural reaction from the young mages.

“They are still young.”

Soon, the golden elevator had stopped at the 19th floor.
Parvon had also arrived through the violet elevator.

“Sir, your private research room is this way”

At the sanctuary of the Archmages, there existed 24 private research rooms. When the Ivory Tower just moved its location, there were 24 Archmages who had achieved 4th class. Thanks to that, there were many spare rooms now.

“I’ll quickly bring your private Archmage. The first lecturer would be...”

While he was saying that, Parvon handed Ian a key.
And Ian was caught by surprise.

‘This is the same room as in my former life.’

He received the same room as in his former life.
Well of course, he was the 12th Archmage like he was now anyway.
The only difference was his age, but it was an expected process, anyway.
Actually, there was nothing special about this situation.

‘But still, it makes me reminisce.’

The more familiar the room was the better.
Ian delightedly opened his room’s door.

“Hi?”

A sharp female voice.
Parvon didn’t need to bring today’s lecturer.
The first lecturer for Ian had already arrived.

“Long time no see, you arrogant brat.”

She revealed her emotions transparently.
It was Archmage Helene.

“Who are you?”

“What?”

Ian was now officially an Archmage.

He had no reason to be patient. Although she was a senior, they were still on the same level, and she had to keep the mutual manner between Archmages. In addition,

‘The reason they sent her’

She had no interest in teaching, nor did she have talent in it.

However, they sent her as the first lecturer.

The reason was simple. They wanted to overwhelm Ian at the very first lecture. By using her rough and violent temper, they wanted to put pressure on Ian.

‘Humph, old farts.’

Ian didn’t want to be played around on their plan. Since Ian possessed a ‘power’ after destroying the mana container, he had only one choice.

‘Making a new stand in the Ivory Tower’

Creating many followers under the name Ian Page.

Making new trends for the group of young mages.

Furthermore, controlling a half of the Ivory Tower.

‘Within 6 years.’

It was the time left for Ian, before Ragnar started to make his move with the support of the tower lord. Ian wanted to make a new power line, that would interrupt every single plan of Ragnar’s and the tower lord, Habert’s.

‘At that point, I might be able to overcome the tower lord’s level.’

There must be a moment he managed to rule the Ivory Tower, when he reached the same level as the tower lord, or maybe, even higher.

“Ah, now I remember. You are the one who was picking up the storage’s shards, weren’t you?”

And Helene was Ian’s first step in conquering the Ivory Tower.

Ian replied with an innocent child's voice.
Of course, its content was not innocent.
It was insulting.

“...You are not just arrogant brat, I recon.”

Helene jumped down from the table where she had sat, and stretched her body.
She was quite tall considering her gender.
Her tight red robe was revealing her glamourous body.

“Ha, fine! I bet you briefly know about this already. History, theory, manners and others that you're supposed to be taught by the academy, we will teach it to you instead. Imagine a freak like you going to the academy. Children over there would be scared, and lose motivation, wouldn't they?”

With her single gesture, books on the shelves were flying and stopped in front of her. The history of the Ivory Tower, fundamental theory of magic etcetera. They were all basic textbooks of the academy.

“But.”

Helene quickly picked one of those, opened it, and turned its pages.

“What is the use of these things?”

Then, she smashed it to the ground.

“Also, it's not my profession. I bet other elders will teach you well. Such as Dekard, who has been teaching for more than ten years. And maybe even the tower lord will teach you, if he has some time.”

Soon, the rest of the books had fallen to the ground.
She wanted to do whatever she wanted.

“You defeated that chick, Cecelia. Didn't you?”

Helene put her head close to Ian's face.
She made a same level of eye contact, by binding her body.

"That bitch had some sense. Ah, I mean for magical combat. How about I give you some lessons? There are many kinds of mages in the world. A mage who's good at fighting, good at supporting other mages, or mages who stay in their labs and spend their lives there forever... And the rest are garbage."

In fact the 'garbage' that she mentioned was referring to most of the Ivory Tower. Many mages who serve to develop human's life. And she hadn't changed a bit, compared to his former life.

"And what do you think about me?"

"I guess you are the first case."

"Correct! In magical fighting, there would be no others who are able to defeat me."

Helene said full of pride.

Ian was admitting that fact.

There were not that many combat agents who weres as good as Helene.

"I expected a lot from her, Cecelia. If she grew well, she could maybe touch my feet. And I may have been able to do some warm ups with her. But she turned out to be a spy. How sad."

She never cared for the empire, nor policy.

She looked disappointed.

"She should've covered herself better, stupid bitch."

Helene shook her head.

Then, she looked at Ian.

"But then, you got her."

Her eyes were full of interest.

Not with eyes of fear while she was picking up the broken mana storage.

"Honestly, I was surprised at first, but now, I just care about one thing. I got a new opponent. All others were being pussies, declining my challenge. By giving me bad excuses, such as 'to preserve the dignity of Archmages', blah blah blah. Well I understand though. The reason was the same. They didn't want to be humiliated."

To young mages, a duel of Archmages was a spectacular event. Especially Helene always preferred public open duels, so there was always a big audience, and it was very hard to defeat her in a magical duel. They chose to avoid her challenge, rather than being humiliated.

“But you know what? You can’t refuse it. Even if you are one of the Archmages. Why? Because I came here to teach you. I am your teacher. As a teacher, it is natural to teach my student with my style, isn’t it?”

The thing that Helene prided herself with.
It was magical duels.

“Come quickly, you don’t have a choice anyway.”

With her word, Helene left the room.
And she talked to the Parvon who was waiting outside of the room.

“Bring other kids to the arena.”
“What...?”
“Are you deaf?”
“A, arena... Ah! Yes Ma’am!”

She told Ian she’d ‘teach’ him, but she was gathering an audience.
She always wanted to receive attention and respect from other youngsters.
She hadn’t changed a bit.

“Are you his supporter? Well, I wish you and him good luck.”

Helene headed to the rooftop of the Ivory Tower.
Ian had followed her silently.
The rooftop wasn’t connected by the elevator. It could only be reached by stairs. And Helene delightfully stepped up the stairs, while showing a bewitching figure with her pelvis.

“Do your best, risk yourself. So that I may teach you happily.”

The highest area of the capital Greenriverdium.
The very top of the Ivory Tower, opened to every side. From the floor to the air, the white area was protected by shield magic. It was the only place where mages can cast

their spells without any care. So it was unofficially called, 'arena'.

"What about this area, do you like it?"

Helene was full of confidence.

She didn't care whether he was talented as the mage of beginning, nor if he was a 4th class mage, but she only made sure that she had superior combat experience and sense of it.

"It is wide."

"Yeah, isn't it?"

However did Helene know it?

That it wasn't first time Ian was visiting.

That he came here more than ten times for duels.

That he had never been defeated.

That Helene was the challenger most of the time.

'Helene was my opponent.'

He claimed his victory from the red robed lady, Helene, more than ten times.

'Nothing different to my former life, I recognize.'

His age was the only difference.

The youngest 12th Archmage.

The same research room.

And Helene who wanted to test Ian's power.

'She didn't let me have a rest.'

In his former life, Helene was stubborn.

With various excuses, she re-challenged him.

Even if she lost again and again and again.

The key to break that meaningless cycle.

Ian knew the answer.

'A shameful defeat.'

In his former life, that's what Ian did. He overwhelmed her, which even made her shut her mouth about the result.

'And this time,'

Fortunately, young mages started to gather.

The bigger the audience, the bigger the humiliation of losing would be.

Helene also knew it. That's what she was aiming for.

The council of Archmages asked her to overwhelm Ian, and she also used to enjoy humiliating her opponent anyway.

'I'll stomp her at the very first duel.'

CHAPTER 38

SOMETIMES THE STICK IS BETTER THAN THE CARROT (2)

Young mages surrounded those two Archmages.
They voluntarily came to watch this spectacular match.

“All of sudden, a match?”
“Helene?”
“Versus the little bo... I mean, sir Ian?”

Young mages often acted like little children.
Who is the strongest among those 12 Archmages?
Who will be the next tower lord?

Most of them were wondering about it.

“But still, opposing Helene is bit too much...”
“Even other Archmages avoided fighting with her.”

Of course, most of them were expecting Helene’s win.
She was one of the top duelists.
With her violent temper and talent as a combat mage, she was a natural-born fighter.

“Well, I guess the audience is big enough.”

Helene squared her shoulder.
While watching Ian, she said.

“Anything you want to prepare? Do it now. Quickly.”
“Not that much, actually.”

Ian walked to the Parvon who was standing between crowd.
While he passed his staff to him, he asked.

“Tell me straight whenever you hear any voice or sound from the staff.”

“Huh? What kind of sound...”

“You will notice whenever it comes out. Please inform me without hesitating.”

“Y, yes sir”

Parvon received the staff, nodding his head. He was confronting his boss, an Archmage. He didn't understand Ian's request, but he had no choice. Support mages had no rights to tackle him. He had to believe and follow whatever Ian said.

“I thought you want to use it?”

“It is expensive.”

“Ha, mages don't need to worry about money.”

“As you know, this is my first day.”

“Don't worry, boy. You will soon get paid nicely for your private research.”

Even the research support allowance wouldn't be enough to buy the staff. Of course, she had no idea that the crystal orb on the staff was actually the communication orb. Helene didn't give a shit about anything but fighting.

“Well, shall we begin?”

Helene was 10 years younger than when Ian saw her in his former life.

But still, her face wasn't that much different.

‘I should bend her will completely.’

She was proud of herself.

She had deserved talent.

Not just her magical talent,

‘She would have great success even if she had become a knight.’

Although her muscle power had limitations as a female, her other features made her unique.

Agility, reaction time, good eye vision.

She was literally a perfect fighter.

‘Her combat style is very different to other mages.’

Thanks to her body, her fighting tactics were completely different to other mages. Unlike other mages, who build their own shields and fight passively.

‘She dodges the opponent’s attack, then counter attacks.’

She preferred dodging, rather than guarding.

A combination of her inborn talent and the support of spells resulted in her being untouchable.

Furthermore, instead of focusing mana to shield spells, she used it for aggressive spells.

Especially, her favorite, fire magic.

‘A normal victory will make it worse.’

In his former life, Ian defeated Helene in various ways.

With an ordinary style of combat magic, with tactics that were one step more cunning, with stronger fire power.

‘Everytime she lost, she made excuses.’

Through her endless re-challenges, Ian finally realised.

He never should leave any ‘hope’ to Helene.

Such as,

Maybe I can try this way next time

Maybe I better complement this weakness

Ian had to destroy her hope completely, so that she would never dare to defeat him.

“Go first. I will give a privilege to my student.”

“Can you deal with it?”

“Ha!”

With Ian’s challenging reply, Helene laughed.

“Common, are you worrying about me? You better watch yourself.”

“Well then. I will accept your offer.”

“Yes yes. Please, come at me quickly.”

Helene was full of confidence.
But for how long she would keep her confidence?

“Hwoo...”

Ian closed his eyes gently.
This time, he didn't draw mana in his body.
Rather, he drew it out of his body.
It was a symptom that was very similar to building shields.

“Humph! You know some tricks, huh?”

By watching Ian's mana, Helene made sure about that Ian would cast his defense magic, soon.

“Whatever shields you are building,”

Helene also started to cast her magic.
A burst of flames appeared nearby her.
Every single of it had size of 'Pyro blasts.'

“I will destroy it for you, boy.”

Whatever shields Ian would build, Helene was confident that she would easily destroy it.

Not only normal shields, but mana barriers and even absolute barriers.
She had destroyed it more than hundreds times.

“Hmm, it won't be as easy as you think.”
“What?”

Ian answered mysteriously.
It wasn't a shield that covered Ian, but 'Chilling Energy'

‘Ice block.’

Mana that was surrounding Ian, soon started to freeze.

Crack, Crack... Craaacckkk!

And ice quickly covered Ian.
It was shield magic as Helene briefly expected.
But it wasn't exactly the shield magic that Helene had expected.

“...Are you kidding me?”

It was a useless move.
It was different to the magic she had expected, but that was all.

“What the hell are you doing?”

As she ridiculed, Helene removed her flames.
Other audiences reacted similarly.
What Ian just did wasn't proper move for duel.

“All of other shields, but that...?”
“He wouldn't be able to do anything.”
“He will lose when his mana is depleted.”

Natural reactions.
'Ice block' wasn't just an ordinary shield.
It had nearly unbreakable hardness, but contained many disadvantages.
First, the caster fell 'asleep'.
Which meant he wouldn't be able to dispel his own magic.
It would continue until his mana was depleted.
It was literally, a type of 'final life saving' magic.

“Hello. Mr. Page? Can you hear me?”

Helene approached to Ian, and said.
She knocked the block as she was knocking Ian's door.
Ian's eyes were closed as he was sleeping.
His lips were shut, his body stayed calm.
With no doubt, he used the Ice Block spell.

“I have no idea what he's thinking.”

Her eyes were full of disappointment.

And her voice revealed even more disappointment.

“I was crazy bitch. What do I expect from this little brat...”

Tap!

Soon, something hit Helene’s back head.

Literally, it ‘tapped’ Helene.

Very gently.

“What the hell?”

It was a small mana sphere.

It had to be casted by a mage.

It was casted without formulas, so it didn’t damage Helene at all.

It’s impact was as same as snow ball.

One of mages must threw it to her.

‘Wait. Hold on a second.’

She shook her head with curiosity.

‘Who would dare to trick me?’

Dare to trick Helene?

Was there anyone who dared to throw a mana sphere at her?

Among those trashes of the Ivory Tower?

‘It can’t be.’

With instinct, Helene looked at Ian in the ice.

Soon, her face turned pale.

“Huh...?”

Ian, in the ice, had to close his eyes.

Until the very last moment. She was so sure about that.

But.

‘Is he... opening his eyes?’

Helene panicked.

Did he managed to open his eyes in the ice?

Furthermore, he managed to move his eyes?

It didn’t make sense at all.

He was supposed to sleep.

‘What on the earth...’

Opening his eyes was already shocking enough.

However, something more surprising happened.

Grrrrrrrrrrr.....

A loud noise came from everywhere.

An uncomfortable sound came from the bottom of the Ivory Tower.

“W, what?”

“Where this sound came from?”

“I think it’s from the bottom...”

Young mages quickly looked around.

Everyone tried to find the source of the sound, and It wasn’t hard to find out.

They found it as soon as they looked down the rooftop.

“...Vines?”

Mages, actually, anyone who could see the Ivory Tower at the moment, would be shocked. From the forest that was surrounding the Ivory Tower, hundreds of thick vines erupted and were crawling on the outer wall of the Ivory Tower.

“What? What is going on!”

By watching those scenes, mages lost their mind.

Nobody dared to answer Helene’s question.

They even couldn’t hear her voice properly.

“You maggots!”

It was a question of one of the mighty Archmages.
But they refused to answer to her?
Helene headed to the edge of the rooftop to check the situation.
At that moment,

“...?”

Vines were crawling up.
What were those things?
With a shocked face, Helene saw Ian.
Still, in the ice, he was looking at her.

‘Is he casting magic in the Ice Block?’

Hundreds of vines erupted from every side.
As they had eyes, they sought the target like snakes.
A red colored target, the caster ordered them.
The vines tried to seek the red target, and soon, they started to move.

“F, fuck...”

She couldn’t help herself.
Hundreds of vines were targeting her.

Burrrn!

Those vines were only targeting Helene.
Helene had burned them.
But the problem was, the vines came endlessly.
Burn, burn and burn.

‘What is this!’

Already a few hours had passed, and that chasing had never ended.
Not only her mana, but her stamina had fallen.
Dodging and burning wasn’t the ultimate solution.
There was only one clear solution.
Suppressing the caster.

‘But how?’

The caster was hiding in the Ice Block.
A strong shield that was formed by freezing mana.
A spell that Ian was supposed to not do anything in.
She had to do something.

‘I need to find a way...’

However, she couldn’t think of any.
No solutions.

“Pant... Pant!”

As time went by, Helene’s breathing got rough.
Her stamina and mana were draining out.
She started to realize that she couldn’t win this fight.

“Yikes!”

As she started to open her guard, vines quickly stretched towards her.
One of the vines quickly tangled her right leg.
Her fire spells were useless.
The vine was faster than that.
From her arms to legs and finally, her body.

Like a worm forming its own cocoon.

“Arrrrrghhh!”

The first time she screamed in her life.
The first feeling of shame.
What had she done in this duel?
She couldn’t even touch her opponent’s skin.
She had to fight with these damn vines for the whole duel until her stamina and mana had been emptied.
It would be less shameful if she had managed to burn down all of those vines.
But, she had been caught. Like a loser.

“H, how...”

She knew Ian had extraordinary talent.
But this was, nonsense.
He didn’t lose his consciousness in the Ice Block.
Furthermore, he used magic.
And there was a more surprising thing that happened.

“...Haha.”

Now, Helene laughed like a mad woman by watching Ian’s next move.
His Ice Block was dispelled.
Did he use his all mana?
No, it shouldn’t be.
Was it too perfect to regard it as a coincidence?

Step, step.

Ian approached Helene.
As she expected, Ian dispelled the Ice Block by his own will.
Otherwise, he couldn’t walk to her like that, without any damage.

“Well, now I see why you are called as the Mage of Beginning.”

Helene’s voice contained bitterness.
Now she understood the meaning of his title.
She could see its power after combat.
He wasn’t an ordinary talented mage.

“I submit. So, will you please remove these dirty vines...”
“Not yet.”

Ian lowered his voice.
It wasn’t good enough. He had to bend her will completely.
Not just for Helene, but to all other mages who were watching it.

‘I will show them who I am.’

Young mages just heard the rumors and announcement.
He passed the interrogation of Archmages.
He earned the title 4th class.
However, there was a huge gap between just listening, and watching it for real.

“W, what do you mean...?”

Soon, Helene asked suspiciously.
Of course, Ian didn't answer.
Instead, he slowly raised his right hand on his head.
He gathered mana on his stretched palm.

“W, wait! Boy? Ian?”

She now even fixed how she called Ian. She was so desperate. If such a high-class aggressive spell landed on her, she would die without a doubt.

“This is just a duel! A practice! Stop it!”

A dark cloud started to gather at the sky of the Ivory Tower.
Its mighty appearance represented its power.

*Grr..... *

The spell Ian was casting, it had a long and complex formula.
And it required a lot of time to be launched.
However, its power was the best of the best among 4th class spells.

“Call Lightning.”

A thick lightning.
It smashed the rooftop of the Ivory Tower.
Precisely, at the point where Helene was tangled.

CRACCKKKK – !

Helene closed her eyes helplessly.
As well as the other mages who were watching it.
White shards of materials that formed the floor of the Ivory Tower were being blown

out.

Even the defensive spell on the Ivory Tower couldn't bear its power.
There would be no doubt about Helene's death.
Only If it hit her directly.

“...!”

Helene opened her eyes.
The floor in front of her was smashed.
Not only that, it was burned badly around the landing spot.
The lightning smashed right in front of Helene.

“Pa, pant! Paaant!”

She finally could breathe.
She survived. Somehow, she survived.
But why does she feel her heart burning?
Actually, it wasn't her heart that was burning.
It was the heat which was coming from the burnt vines.
Without the vines, she would be burnt badly.

“Stop.”

Ian, who was standing out of the area of effect of lightning, made small gestures, then the vines released Helene.
Helene fell down.
She couldn't manage to keep herself standing.

“Helene.”

Ian approached Helene very closely.

“D, don't come to me...!”

Helene shouted unconsciously.
Her instinct refused Ian.

“Is there anymore,”

However, Ian never cared about her reaction.
Rather, he sat down and looked straight at Helene.

“You want to teach me?”

Helene shook her head desperately.
Any more to teach?
What was he intending to?
Helene couldn’t understand it, also didn’t want to understand.
She just wanted to run away from Ian.
Otherwise, she couldn’t calm herself, from the unknown fear, and her beating heart.

“Then, excuse me, I got to go.”

With those words, Ian walked away.
As he approached, mages stepped back.
And naturally, they made a way for Ian.
At the end of the way, Ian could see some special guests.
Middle-aged mages, who were great seniors to most of the mages.
Including a few Archmages and the Tower Lord, Habert.
They came to the roof when they saw those vines climbing the tower.

“Excuse me...”

Ian said while watching them.

“Can you step aside, please? I feel tired.”

They stepped aside with confused face.



A new Archmage defeated Helene.
The Ivory Tower, which was used to being silent, faced a new era.
Especially, young mages were moved greatly.

“He cast magic while in Ice Block...”
“He’s on a level of creating magic, isn’t he?”

Wherever they go, it was about Ian, Ian Page.
There were no gossips that didn't include him.
However, not all members of the Ivory Tower got excited.

“Is she still inside, without coming out?”

“Yes. She refused to eat for days.”

“Hmm.”

The 19th floor where individual research rooms were located.
There was only silence on this floor.
More than silence, depression.

“Helene, can you hear me?”

In front of Helene's research room.
With a knock, the Tower Lord called her.

“I understand what you might be feeling. However, you can't just stay there without eating. Let's have a conversation, yeah?”

With a warm voice, the Tower Lord unlocked her research room.
While he was entering to her room slowly,

Clank!

Tower lord quickly cast a shield magic, to block the bottle which was thrown at him.
Inside of the research room was the worse than he could've imagined.

“Ha...”

A bunch of wine glasses was rolling on the floor.
Glasses which were laying down on the floor were smashed.
Including books, there were nothing that stayed clean.

“Helene.”

“Get out.”

“It won't solve any...”

“GET THE HELL OUT!”

Unsettled hair, lightless face, full of the smell of alcohol.
Literally, she looked wasted.
It wasn't only the result of the defeat.
She was defeated shamefully, in front of numerous audiences.
She screamed like a loser and begged for her life.
However, she couldn't find any solution to beat him.
She only barely managed to run away.
Her pride couldn't accept any of these situations.
Her pride was ruined completely.

"Firstly, we better forbid alcohols to be brought in. Have a meal after you get clear headed. The body of every single mage does not belong to them. It belongs to the Ivory Tower. You know it very well, don't you?"

"Leave me alone. Please... PLEASE!"

"...Alright. I will come again tomorrow."

The Tower Lord left the room.

"Tsk tsk. Look at her face."

He clicked his tongue.
His face was getting ugly.
He made an immature decision. He had planned to kneel down Ian Page at the very beginning. However, he instead smashed Helene ruthlessly.

'It's not a matter of taming him.'

On the day, when Ian Page stomped Helene, Ian Page said to him, 'please step aside.' Including him, there were great seniors on his path.
What a brave and arrogant kid.

'He is not a dog who suits a leash... '

A leash was a tool which only can be used on dogs.
It wasn't designed for a ferocious beast.
A beast may try to bite the master whenever it can.

'Rather he was a wolf.'

A beast that can't be tamed even at its young age.

Now he better choose a different way, to make him a loyal servant to the Ivory Tower.

Actually,

‘To make him ‘MY’ loyal servant.’

A clearer, unofficial trick.

A secret trick that even other archmages shouldn’t know.

Ian deserved such special treatment.

‘I need a lot of time, a large amount of time.’

Soon, Habert reached the 22nd floor, the room of the Tower Lord.

There, a familiar face awaited him.

“Hello, Tower Lord.”

“Your highness.”

A boy who dared to sit on the chair of the Tower Lord.

The fifth prince, Ragnar Greenriver.

The boy welcomed him.

“Sorry for being late.”

“I’m okay with it, by the way, please keep telling me the story you have said.”

“What kind of story...”

“Ian Page.”

Two men who put masks on their own face.

Actually, they suited each other quite well.

CHAPTER 39

FASHIONABLE SOCIETY (1)

“We reduced its size to half, will it be okay?”

One day in a peaceful capital.
In front of the mansion of Ian Page.
A boy was confronting Ian.
A boy who looked 3 to 4 years older than Ian.
It was a ‘Vans,’ the novice of Thram’s workshop.

“It won’t be easy to make it smaller, right?”
“I’m sorry but yes. Smaller than that would be out of our technology...”

Ian couldn’t think of any portable design of the communication orb for his mother.
So, he placed his order to the workshop again.
And this was the result.

“It will be enough, though. You must have gone through many efforts.”
“Our best workers spent days to do it. A, and me as well.”
“Is it that hard of a task?”
“Yes sir. Firstly, it is an expensive product, so we had to be careful. We dismantled every part of it, and we started from the fundamental mana circuit...”

Vans started to recite the complicated hextech vocabulary.
Ian couldn’t understand a single word of it.
Ian decided to change the topic.

“Here is my payment.”
“N, no thank you. Chief told me not to receive any extra payment...”
“But you did your job.”
“Ah, he is strict man, thank you for your kindness, though.”

Ian wanted to hand over money bag, but Vans refused it.
He couldn’t refuse his master’s order. Ian may give it forcefully since he had enough

power to overwritten his order, but it would only make Vans get into the trouble.

“Then.”

Ian pick portion of money from a bag, and handed to Vans.

“Take it as reward for your delivery.”

“B, but I can’t...”

Ian remained silence.

It was a silent gesture.

Vans understood it, and he received the money, embarrassed.

“T, thank you so much! Thank you for caring me.”

It was a kindness from an Archmage, which was honor to him.

Suddenly, as he recalled something, Vans started to be looked nervous.

“S, sir Ian?”

“Yes, please speak.”

“Before a few weeks ago, when you visited our workshop for the first time, I was in a hurry and... I was being rude to you...”

Suddenly, Vans started his confession.

“I, I can’t remember it clearly, but whether I really did it or not, I kept it in mind and have felt sorry for you since then...”

It seemed he was worrying about it from since. It was a natural reaction though.

Ian wasn’t just normal noble, but an Archmage. And Vans was being rude to such a high person. If Ian wanted, he could order it to kick him out from the workshop.

“Ah, now I remember.”

“Y, yes?”

“You told me to get off, didn’t you?”

“Yikes!”

Vans was regretting his decision now.

He shouldn’t have said it.

“Please be careful next time.”

“Y, yes sir! I won’t! I appreciate your forgiveness!”

He just wanted to advise Vans to be aware about other nobles and mages, but it seemed Vans understood it in different way.

‘Well, I won’t need to correct it though.’

In anyway, Vans would act more carefully now.

After Vans left, Ian returned to the mansion.

“Boss!”

Douglas, who was listening their conversation sneakily, asked to Ian.

“Is he your new direct subordinate?”

“What?”

“The boy you just met. If he is a new recruit, he is under my rank.”

“Ha, you go too far.”

Today was Douglas’ first day of school.

To ‘The Royal Alchemy Academy’.

He wore nice and neat clothes.

Like Ledio.

“I will be back after bringing him to the academy, sir.”

“See you later, Boss!”

After Ledio and his son left, the mansion was full of silence.

Ian’s mother didn’t leave her kitchen often these days.

She was inventing a ‘new red bean pie.’

She was shocked after the received feedback of her pie from the Crown Prince as ‘mud.’

Thanks to him, Ian ate a bunch of pies recently.

Now, he started to feel sick of it.

‘It’s good to have peaceful moments, but.’

Ian had not that much to do nowadays.
He just needed to do simple studies at the Ivory Tower.
He was also receiving the academy curriculum individually.

‘It’s too peaceful.’

Since he rewound time, he didn’t have a single moment to rest.
From the mana test to the duel with Helene.
Physical hardness could be restored by mana breath.
However, mental hardness couldn’t be restored easily.
He wanted to take a rest, and he was finally granted it.
But, now he forgot how to enjoy this resting moment.

‘Am I allowed to rest like this while doing nothing?’

Such pressure didn’t release Ian easily.
He was afraid.
He had to regain his power, and had to protect his mother.
In addition, he had to make a new trending power at the ivory tower.
For last, his revenge on Ragnar.
He still had a long way to go.

“Phew.”

Ian laid down on the big chair.
Ian had no one, who might gladly chat with him and chill.
A true ‘friend’, who could be friendly and trusted without afraid of Ian’s Archmage title.

‘I have none.’

Mother was just mother.
Ledio was too thoughtful.
Douglas was too young.
The other honorable mention would be...

‘The Crown Prince?’

Ian suddenly remembered the Crown Prince, Hayden.

Soon, he shook his head.

‘What the heck am I thinking...’

Out of all people but why the Crown Prince?
Ian blamed himself.

“Sir Ian.”

At that moment, a maid came to Ian.
It was a maid called, ‘Hara.’

“An invitation from the royal palace has been sent to you.”
“An invitation?”

Invitation? For what?
There were no parties to be invited as far as Ian knew.
Ian quickly started to read the letter.

It wasn’t an invitation from the Emperor.
The sigil on the letter was the Crown Prince’s.
Honestly, Ian was glad to see it.

‘Fashionable Society, is it?’

The content of the letter was simple
The royal ‘Fashionable Society’ would be held soon.
Especially, this time, it would be held in the name of the Crown Prince, not the Emperor.
And the letter invited Ian and Vanessa to the party.
Next week, at the royal ballroom.

‘Why did he invite me to this party?’

Normally, a mage never got an invitation from the Fashionable Society.
While magic was the strongest weapon of the Ivory Tower, the royalty’s best weapon was dignity, the citizens, and a numerous nobles’ soldiers and money. Hence the connection between nobles was very important, and to manage and develop this relationship, the ‘Fashionable Society’ was commonly used as a ‘tool’.

‘He has no idea of this.’

And at such a place, did he just invite an Archmage of the Ivory Tower?
If the Emperor knew of this, it would make him disappointed.

[And you are the only one who knows this party yet!]

Furthermore, at the very bottom of the invitation,
The Crown Prince added a tag, full of his pride, and a message was written.
Maybe, except Ian, he would send this invitation to other nobles only a few days before
the event, or maybe even at the very morning of the event day.
Simply, to tease them.

‘Yeah, that’s typical of him.’

Not just inviting a mage, but also teasing other nobles.
He was totally ruining the true meaning of the Fashionable Society.
He used to like such stupid actions.
And did Ian regard him as his friend for once?
As a true friend who might chat and chill with him?
Ian regretted what he had thought.
The Crown Prince was no more than a convenient tool.

“...”

However, what made Ian have to worry about him?
Ian could just leave him to do whatever he wanted, so that every single noble turned
away from the Crown Prince.

“Sigh, damn.”

Ian rubbed his face roughly.
He walked to his desk.
He opened an empty parchment while holding a pen in his hand to write a letter to the
Crown Prince.

‘If he still doesn’t take my advice, then let him receive what he deserves.’

Ian started to write his letter.



Ian's letter was effective.

The nobles who were meant to be invited received the invitation early enough to prepare for the society.

However, the names of Ian and Vanessa hadn't been omitted from the guest list of the Fashionable Society.

Only half of Ian's letter worked.

'Still, it is good enough for him.'

So Ian and his mother had to attend the society.

Ian wore his clothes as he visited the emperor, as well as Vanessa.

"I, I really don't know if I am allowed to enter."

It was Vanessa's first time visiting the palace.

Her face was full of worries.

Her voice was shaking.

"Don't worry too much. It's nothing hard."

Ian didn't know well how 'Fashionable Society' worked. However, he imagined something whenever he saw his mother in a luxurious dress. If she was a daughter of a noble family, she must be one of the most famous in the society. And that imagination came true when Ian saw his mother today. Since she had rested and ate well recently, and received beauty care from the maids, she looked much more beautiful than before.

'I can see the power of professional beauty care maids.'

From makeup to accessories, she was perfect.

And Ian could be sure of one thing.

'I must have inherited my father's appearance.'

Or maybe he's adopted.

Vanessa was that beautiful.

“Sir Ian.”

A voice called Ian.

It was a servant who guided the guests of the society.

“I received your name, sir Ian. And this is... Mrs. Page...?”

The servant was astonished by Vanessa’s beauty.

“A, are you?”

It was already well spread that Ian Page’s mother was once a kitchen maid. And since the servant was a member of the lower rank class, that fact made him more interested. Vanessa’s dramatically changed life was a legend to them.

‘I can’t believe that she was a kitchen maid...’

The servant had seen many kitchen maids, and also acknowledged the rough appearance of northern ladies.

However, Vanessa destroyed this stereotype.

She was a rare beauty.

“Y, yes, I am Mrs. Page. Is there any problem...?”

“Ah! Not at all. Please come in. This way.”

The servant barely managed to calm himself, and led the way.

But Vanessa couldn’t step in easily.

“Let’s go mom.”

“H, huh?”

Ian firmly grabbed his mother’s hand and pulled her.

“Then, please enjoy.”

The servant led them to the ballroom.

He left to guide other guests.

A mother and son were standing awkwardly.

“M, many people are here.”

“Yeah, there are.”

Ian also had no idea about the Fashionable Society.

Of course, he was a mage of the Ivory Tower.

Furthermore, he was the head of them.

Although he told his mother that there was nothing hard about the society, he didn't know much about it.

‘It's more than I heard.’

The ballroom was separated into three sections.

Firstly, a section of the heads of the invited families.

Secondly, a section for young reclaimers.

At last, a section for ladies and wives of the house.

Of course, there were no rules that divided them, but just common manners did.

‘I can't leave my mother alone...’

Ian couldn't just stand at the middle of the entrance.

Ian had to move to the section where the heads of the families or young reclaimers gathered, while his mother had to go where the ladies gathered.

Ian didn't feel comfortable about it.

‘Should I introduce myself as a mage?’

It was the Fashionable Society for nobles.

It was held to build close relationships between houses.

A chance to flatter the higher rank houses.

A discrimination between ranks.

It was a maw of politics.

“Ian.”

Due to Ian's unwell face, Vanessa asked him first.

“I am supposed to go to that section, right?”

She had her own eyes, and was able to think. She also knew that this ballroom was divided into three sections.

“No, you don’t have to...”

“I’m fine. They are all high nobles, I should do what I have to do.”

With her smiling face, Vanessa tried to comfort her son. With embarrassed steps, she approached the section where the ladies were gathered. As others did, she picked up a glass of alcohol.

“Mom.”

Due to Ian’s calling, Vanessa looked back.

Her face looked very nervous.

“You know who I am, right?”

“Huh?”

“There is no one who is higher than you. So, identify yourself with pride. Inform them of your son, and my title.”

He didn’t just say so to comfort her.

Vanessa was the mother of a 4th class mage of the Ivory Tower. She was the mother of a mighty Archmage. Among these nobles, there were none who dare to stand above her.

“Sure, I am proud of you.”

With a cheerful pose, Vanessa walked into the group. She looked confident, but Ian still felt uncomfortable. He couldn’t move, but was just watching where his mother was standing.

CHAPTER 40

FASHIONABLE SOCIETY (2)

“Your skin’s getting younger and younger, my lady...”

“My second son finally got into the Ivory Tower...”

“Oh, congratulations. My first son...”

Until the Crown Prince started the society officially, everyone was free to say hello to each other. Everyone knew each other’s face very well, of course. Only Vanessa was isolated alone.

“Uhm...”

As nervous as she was, Vanessa looked around without focus.

She drank a sip of alcohol.

She wasn’t familiar with alcohol either.

She didn’t like alcohol.

‘It’s bitter...’

She was just holding the glass for decoration.

She hadn’t experienced this type of party.

She had attended a few fashionable societies a few times in the northern territory.

However, the northern party was much less strict and more free.

Over there they didn’t make small talk like this, nor made their own small groups.

“Who is the lady over there?”

A random voice was directed at Vanessa.

From the voice, noble ladies started to look at Vanessa.

“Who is that?”

“I’ve never seen her before.”

A small whisper was getting bigger. These ladies were also playing their political rule. Which meant they memorized most of the ladies from a powerful family. From a young age they were trained in this way.

“...”

Suddenly, the whispering had stopped.

Did they finish their talking?

Unfortunately for Vanessa, it wasn’t over.

They just finished their ‘analysis’.

“She has some good face...”

“Is she a concubine?”

A total stranger to the noble ladies.

The stranger had a good facial mask, but was not young.

And she didn’t look confident.

In that case, they concluded her status in two cases.

The stranger must be a lady of a small and weak family, or a concubine of it.

“I think she is concubine. She’s got a big ass.”

“She has a big ass so...”

“Seems she doesn’t have a son yet, does she?”

“Haha, you are entertaining, Mrs.”

They spoke it quietly, but clearly.

Their every single word was relayed to Vanessa.

‘Why am I here...?’

Vanessa’s hand started shaking.

She wanted to run away from this ballroom.

But she couldn’t.

She didn’t want to bring disgrace on Ian.

‘Those noble bastards.’

And Ian heard it very clearly as well.

Every single word of it.

Thanks to support of mana.

All of them were wives of noble houses, or a lady who will be.

Ian never expected them to be so flimsy.

‘Maybe I overestimated them.’

They needed to be stopped.

Ian started to walk to them quickly.

Then suddenly,

“I am so disappointed in you ladies.”

The voice that stopped Ian.

It was the princess of royal, 'Hyree Greenriver'

"P, princess?"

The sudden appearance of the princess panicked those ladies.

She was supposed to enter the ballroom with the Crown Prince, but why was she here?

"Mrs. Serecio."

"I, I am listening, my lady."

"Is it true that it's easier to give a birth if a woman has a bigger ass?"

The target was the Mrs. Serecio who mentioned her ass before.

The princess must have heard everything before.

"T, that is..."

"Then can you say the same thing to me?"

"W, what do you mean..."

"According to what you say, Aren't I the most suitable as a concubine?"

Her short speech was very challenging.

She was still at the border between girl and lady.

"We have gathered here to have a good relationship. The Crown Prince has invited all of you with his very hand. But now, look at what these high noble ladies are doing. Watch your language and do not insult any of the guests of the Crown Prince."

Even if she was young, her speech was critical. Not even these ladies, but men over there were all watching here now.

"Oh, let me guess. It is not the party that's held by the Emperor, but the Crown Prince. So now you ladies are insulting his guest?"

“M, my lady! It is not...”

Thanks to her criticism, the ladies' faces turned pale.

After a huge sigh, the princess approached Vanessa.

Vanessa's face was still in dark.

“Mrs, are you okay?”

“I, I...”

“I apologize to you instead.”

“I am not...”

“Pardon?”

“I am not a concubine.”

Vanessa managed to stop her shaking.

Then she seeked Ian.

Finally, she made eye contact with Ian.

Vanessa's eyes were asking his permission.

Ian nodded shortly.

“I, I just came here... thanks to my son. This party is too much for me, so I feel uncomfortable...”

It was the princess who made a curious face firstly.

Other ladies looked confused.

Why is she mentioning her son, not her family?

“My son is only supposed to be invited, but I luckily got invited, too... Ah, my son's

name is Ian, Ian Page. H, he just became a mage of the Ivory Tower recently."

The mage of the Ivory Tower, Ian Page.

His name was followed by four titles.

"The Ivory Tower' 'Youngest' 'Arch mage.' '4th class.'

Who wouldn't know? No one in the capital.

Now the faces of the other ladies turned black.

'M, mage? Why here?'

'Did a mage just get invited to fashionable society?'

An Archmage and his mother were invited to the fashionable society.

It was an extremely rare case in the whole history of the empire.

But right now, it didn't the matter.

They were being very rude to the mother of the Archmage.

It was a vital mistake.

"The Crown Prince highness enters."

While the room was full of heavy silence,

An announcement awoke the people from their thinking.

Quickly, they returned to their place.

For some ladies, his appearance saved their life for a moment.

"Ah, hello guys. Hello."

The Crown Prince made a feathery wave.

He moved onto the chair for the host of the party.

He wore more luxurious cloth than on normal days.

Only If he hadn't opened his mouth, he wouldn't lose his dignity.

"Khmhm! As everyone knows, I held this fashionable society, instead of my father. Well let's see, I brought some introduction, but before all of that..."

After pausing his speech, he started to search for someone.

"Ah! There you are!"

It was Ian, who the Crown Prince was looking for. Suddenly the Crown Prince made huge smile.

"I would like to introduce someone before this party. A special guest of today, the youngest 4th class Archmage, my only brother in oath, from since I met him in the Mogrian province."

The Crown Prince had refused to hold the fashionable society even when the Emperor had asked to.

However, in this year, he didn't.

Rather, the Crown Prince asked before his father asked to him.

The reason was simple.

"Ian Page!"

"Mrs, how many times had I told you to think before act? You ruined the future of our house! Are you out of your mind?"

Including Mrs. Serecio, few ladies of noble house, were called by the head of their house, and being punished.

"I, I will do my best to fix this..."

"Best? Not good enough! By any means necessary, fix this situation! YOU MUST!"

They were in an emergency.

Every lady bent their body to Ian's mother, Vanessa Page, as much as a maid did.

Now Vanessa was treated more like royalty than the princess who was next to her.

'Better than me.'

His title of Archmage made them quiet, but it was the Crown Prince who turned the tide completely. Ian used to look down on the Crown Prince. But today, he satisfied Ian.

'His treatment was much wiser than the emotional reaction from me.'

From since he rewound the time, he couldn't calm down whenever his mother was related.

Maybe because he lost his mother once before?

Every time his emotions blinded him. It wasn't an ideal reaction for his mother, but he couldn't control it.

'I'm thinking too much sometimes.'

On the other hand, the Crown Prince ended the situation with a single speech.

It was his talent.

Even though he didn't intend to.

"Haha! I received your royal letter very well."

There was nothing funny, but the Crown Prince made big smile.

Today, Ian decided to listen and support him.

Ian didn't know when he became his royal servant and his brother in law, but it was tolerable.

"Recently, I read some book. There is such a phrase. A good king always listen to his men's advice."

He was supposed to finish reading the book when he was 8 years old.

It seemed he just started reading it.

“I read your letter very carefully. But the book also said another things. Listen to your men’s advice carefully, but take only the advice that is necessary. The decision is yours.”

With his proud voice, the Crown Prince kept saying.

“So I did. As you said, I didn’t trick the nobles, but I really wanted to invite you. You were the reason for this fashionable society after all. So I took half of your advice! Fairly, I took half and ignored half. As the book says.”

Take only what’s necessary.

It shouldn’t mean this.

But, Ian decided to play around with him for today.

“Outstanding, your highness.”

“Haha you make me feel high. Please keep... what is it? Yes! Please keep giving royal advice to me. I thought you were just a kid, but you actually care for me a lot.”

Ian replied with nodding, with a smile on his face.

“Ah, by the way. When I just entered, the atmosphere was weird. Did anything happen before? Hyree... I mean, the princess was supposed to enter with me. But she had arrived here earlier.”

While saying this, he looked at the princess and Vanessa.

He had lived his life, which was full of hidden enemies.

He had a good sixth sense.

“It’s just a tiny thing, your highness.”

“That means there was something.”

“There was some misunderstanding. My mother was a stranger to other nobles.”

The Crown Prince moved his eyebrows shortly.

He had a good sense for these kinds of things.

“I had to do something.”

“Your highness.”

“Don’t worry. I still remember your advice. Draw loyalism from the nobles and make them stand on my side. Trust me, I am capable of it.”

With confidence, the Crown Prince walked into the section, where Vanessa was standing.

“Mrs. Page, Sorry for my late greeting.”

With a serious face, the Crown Prince greeted her.

With an embarrassed face, Vanessa replied to him.

“Y, your highness.”

“I guess I mistreated the mother of my brother in oath. Well, then... Should I call you as mother in oath?”

The Crown Prince said with a smile on his face.

There was no such title called mother in oath in Greenriver.

However, his intention was obvious.

“Tell me whatever you want. I will listen.”

The faces of the ladies who were flattering each other nearby, especially Mrs. Serecio and the ladies with her, turned shocked.

The princess wasn’t enough, but now the Crown Prince.

He talked to Vanessa full of care with the title of 'Mother in oath.'

They chose the wrong person. Very wrong.

'I have to admit. In this field, he is much better than me.'

Ian thought while watching the Crown Prince's actions.

He had to admit.

The Crown Prince was one of the best in the world on how to treat nobles.

"Hmm."

Due to sudden attention to Ian, he looked around.

Numerous heads of houses and reclaimers looked at Ian.

They were trying to make contact with him while the Crown Prince was away.

'Before I get bothered...'

Ian left his seat quietly.

He left from the ballroom to the connected terrace.

Ian never expected to see anyone here, but there was a very fit man with height.

He was too fit for a normal noble.

"Sir Oliver?"

CHAPTER 41

FASHIONABLE SOCIETY (3)

“Sir Oliver?”

Ian was surprised. It was Captain Oliver.
The reason Ian was surprised was due to Oliver's tuxedo.
Ian hadn't seen him wear anything but heavy armor.
He looked quite awkward wearing formal attire.

“Sir Ian.”

It seemed that he didn't like his current appearance either.
Even without Ian asking,

“His Highness, The Crown Prince ordered me to do so.”

He told Ian why he was wearing a tuxedo.
It seemed the crown prince had invited him as well, and he might have been ordered to wear formal attire and not armor.

“I guess you are better suited to wearing armor.”
“Khm!”

With Ian's joke, he coughed.
He has never shown this embarrassed side of him before.
He wasn't the type of man for the Fashionable Society.

“.....”

A silence followed after Ian's joke.
It was Oliver who broke the silence first.

“.....I heard about it.”
“What did you hear? What are you talking about?”

“People are saying that you defeated archmage Helene in combat.”

“You heard about it? That’s strange; the Ivory Tower usually prefers to keep their internal activities a secret.”

“Without intelligence activities, there is no use for knights in this era.”

In this era.

It was an era where mages are considered as the strongest force available.

Swordsmen were just consumable units. Or considered as housekeepers.

Or even as decoration.

Oliver’s voice had an edge of bitterness to it.

“And I read the letter you had sent to highness, as well.”

“So, is that part of ‘intelligence activities of knights’ as well?”

“No. The crown prince highness showed me directly.”

Ian tried to make a joke, but Oliver didn’t sway this time.

“I was surprised. Your born talent can explain why you became Archmage at a very young age, those sort of things. However, the content of your letter... It seems you know not only the political circumstance of the crown prince, but also see through his characteristics as well.”

The current circumstances the crown prince confronted and his characteristics.

Like in Ian’s former life, it was headed for the worst case scenario.

Nobody considered the crown prince to be capable of taking the position of the emperor.

Even his royal servant, Oliver as well.

“It made me suspect whether you are just a young boy.”

“Haha, I just went through a complex life...”

Ian made an excuse.

Oliver had a sip of alcohol.

Although he didn’t look like he was drunk, he was.

“However, the most surprising thing was that His Highness, The Crown Prince tries to listen whenever you say something. He even ignores the Emperor’s order, but he listens to the advice of a young mage.”

To Oliver, it was an amazing thing.

It seemed the crown prince might be able to change into a better man.

“So, I have to confirm.”

“Confirm?”

“Who did you choose?”

Oliver had to find out.

Whether Ian was a powerful ally or a dangerous enemy.

“It doesn’t matter who you support. It will rather be who do you stand for. As I know, the Ivory Tower supports the 5th prince. So I want to ask. Are you standing with the Ivory Tower?”

His question was straight.

It wasn’t a proper question for a young kid.

However, Oliver was serious.

Age didn’t matter to him.

He already saw Ian Page’s power.

Due to Ian’s letter, he already knew Ian’s capabilities.

Also, he already felt his bravery at his mansion a few months ago.

“I think you are drunk. I didn’t make a choice...”

“Sorry, but I need a clear answer. So I can judge,”

Suddenly, Oliver’s eyes shone.

His monstrous mental focus had drawn away from the drunkenness at once.

“Ally or enemy.”

The mage of the Ivory Tower, who may be able to control the crown prince.

Oliver had to define this dangerous boy clearly.

Oliver could choose a different prince and be the most famous and glorious knight in history.

However, he chose to be the first knight of the crown prince.

So, he wanted to find out.

“It’s a meaningless question.”

Ian opened his mouth slowly.
It wasn't the answer that Oliver wanted.

"Who would speak the truth in this situation?"

What he said made sense.
He could just lie to him that he will support the crown prince.
There was no point to the question.

"Whether you speak lies or truth."

However, Oliver wasn't a fool.
He already considered that.
However, the reason he was so desperate was,

"I will decide to believe it or not."

Because he saw some possibility from Ian.
He concluded that Ian might support the crown prince.

"Well, I don't know yet."
"I only want a clear answer."
"But I really don't know."

Ian replied seriously.
He never planned to support someone.
He didn't care who would become the next emperor nor about the unity of the continent.
He just wanted to interrupt every single plan of Ragnar.
And he wanted to take revenge on him at a very critical point.
At that point, he might restore most of his power.
Then, he'd just happily live with precious people.

"But."

Ian looked at Oliver's eyes straightly.
The 2nd royal knight captain, Oliver Reywood.
The last knight who guarded the crown prince before he died.
Ian could give him some different answer.

“I will NEVER support the 5th crown prince.”

Surprised, Oliver looked around.

It was a much more straightforward confirmation than he had expected.

However, there was no chance that anybody heard what Ian said.

Ian had already concealed his surroundings with a silence spell.

Only Oliver could hear Ian’s answer.

“Is it enough?”

“For now, very.”

“That’s good to hear.”

“Then, may I ask you one favor?”

“Speak first, I will decide later.”

“Before you choose which side you want to support, be my duel opponent.”

“Duel opponent?”

With the unexpected question, Ian shook his head curiously.

Not only checking Ian’s standing but now Oliver asked Ian to be his duel partner?

“I need the power to confront.”

“A mage?”

“That’s right.”

It was quite a rare opportunity for knights to duel with a mage.

There was no chance at all.

And Oliver needed it the most.

“Your sword may be pointed at me later, might it not?”

“I won’t deny it.”

“You are thick skinned.”

Oliver didn’t deny it either.

He was desperate, though.

He needed to have some combat experience against a mage.

“I refuse.”

“May I ask you a reason?”

“There is no benefit for me.”

It was a straight and clear reason.
There was no benefit.

“What if I pay you some reward?”
“I don’t know is there any reward that will satisfy me.”

Whenever Ian had time, he trained himself.
From inventing mana breath to improving spell formulae.
To Ian, time was essential.
No amount of money was enough to move him.
He might have to do it if the emperor or crown prince asked him to.

“This necklace,”

Oliver unchained a necklace on his neck.
It was a necklace that had no decorating jewels at all.

“When I was ordered to serve the crown prince on the first day, the queen highness gifted it to me. She said it has special magic on it so that it will replenish my mind clearly.”

A magical necklace?
Ian looked at the necklace carefully.
There was nothing special about it.

“When I put on it, it does have some power indeed.”

And now Oliver said it does work.
Then what she said must be true.
Oliver was also a knight, with a mana heart.

‘Ah, maybe then,’

An old memory struck Ian’s head.
The lost royal treasure artifact which was never, of which the queen was the last owner of.
And it was said to be a necklace.

'It can't be.'

It was very likely to be it.

In his former life, Oliver's body was split into pieces.

As numerous high-class spells struck him.

The necklace was very likely to be burnt together with Oliver.

"I will give it to you as payment. I am sure this will work much better on you, rather than me. Mages rely on their head, but swordsmen rely on their instinct, don't they?"

And that's why he needed to duel with Ian many times.

An instinct that needed to be awakened against mages.

His body didn't have such an instinct yet.

"But isn't it the necklace left by the deceased queen?"

"She gave it to me so that I can protect the crown prince highness better. And I want to duel with you to keep her last words. So I think the queen Her Highness will understand my decision."

Oliver was determined.

To Ian, it was not a bad trade.

Mages always had to ready their brain at best.

Those level of high-class artifacts might be quite useful to him.

"Fine, that's a deal."

Gently, Ian received the necklace.

As he injected a bit of mana, it started to oscillate.

A unique reaction that could be only observed by an artifact with high-class magical formulae.

All of sudden,

BANG!

A sudden explosion was heard from outside of the royal palace.

A dark smoke was rising.

And that didn't end.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The continuous explosion occurred in order.
It wasn't explosions that were massive enough to shake the ground.
However, it threatened the whole royal palace from outside and inside.
Most of all,

Baaaang!

A similar explosion occurred from inside of the ballroom.
At cornered site, a small fire was burning.
Fortunately, there were no one injured severely.

“Your highness!”

Oliver rushed to the crown prince.
Ian also brought his mother's arm and stood next to the crown prince.
With the princess who was with Vanessa.

“Mana barrier”

Ian generated shields on to the crown prince, his mother, and princess.
Without hesitation, Ian asked princess.

“Do you know how to inject mana to the barrier?”
“.....What?”

Ian's question contained many meanings.
Embarrassed, Princess Hyree's eyes shook.
It was a secret that she was training with magic.
But how does the youngest archmage know it?

“Calm down, just answer my question.”
“I, I did learn...”
“Inject a little amount of mana. It will remain for a while.”

After ordering, Ian looked away.
It was such an urgent situation that Hyree couldn't ask further.
She decided to focus on the barrier.

“It’s too small an area. Shouldn’t we leave the room?”

Oliver asked with an urgent voice.

They needed a wider space to defend against further attacks.

Ian had thought in the same way

A few seconds ago.

‘Something is not right’

Precisely, It was too unprepared.

Chain explosions occurred from the outside of the royal palace.

It must’ve been planted previously.

‘What is the purpose?’

As the explosions were from the inside of the palace, so there must be a spy.

It must have been prepared a while ago.

However, It was too weak.

Ian couldn’t find any particular benefit of the explosions.

It wasn’t huge enough to destroy the royal palace.

Rather, it was not even strong enough to destroy a single castle wall.

Also, it seemed the explosion didn’t aim for killing people.

“Your Highness! Are you okay? Your Highness!”

After they had heard the explosions, the 2nd royal knight order arrived quickly.

As they were trained, they made a wide formation.

A formation to protect the crown prince firmly.

“Captain, any injuries?”

“I am fine. what’s situation out there?”

“We activated emergency communication orb.”

The emergency communication orb of the royal palace.

It was connected with the headquarters of the Knights order, The Imperial Barracks, and to the Ivory Tower.

An emergency call to assemble most of the forces to the royal palace.

An emergency operation was just activated.

‘Emergency communication orb?’

Most of the forces were coming to the Royal Palace.
What if this explosion was aiming for this?
What if it wasn’t unprepared, but their best?

‘Perhaps.’

Ian approached the corner of the ballroom.
There were maids who were shaking body while laying down.

“Turn up your heads, please.”
“S, sir! W, we don’t know any...”
“You just need to answer my question.”

With his saying, maids raised their head slowly.
All of their faces were frightened.

“A maid of the separated palace, Isabel. have you heard of her name?”

All of sudden, why did he ask her name?
A maid who looked afraid opened her mouth.

“Y, yes I know.”
“Did she come to the ballroom?”
“Yes? Ah, yes! She said she wanted to visit and experience it, so she swapped with my friend who was supposed to come...”

The maids of the crown prince palace were expected to be here today, and Isabel switched her position with one of them, with the excuse that she wanted to see how the ball goes.

‘Coldwalker’

The maid of the separated palace, the future chief maid of the separated palace, Isabel. She was one of the Coldwood Empire spies, A Coldwalker.
Ian had mentioned her during combat between Cecelia.
Isabel must be the one who planted the bomb in the ballroom.

‘It’s a deceiving movement.’

A faint motion that was prepared by spies for a long time.

Fortunately, there was the announcement of the Fashionable Society, so they found the proper time to act.

A terrorist act, that happened while most of the high nobles were gathered at a single place.

It was good enough to confuse them and blind their enemies’ eyes.

So they operated the emergency call.

Like now.

‘Their real purpose must be to rescue Cecelia.’

When the Ivory Tower lost its guards, they would infiltrate.

Rescue her? No, it wouldn’t be possible.

Even a Coldwalker wouldn’t be able to rescue her.

For a brief moment, they would try to contact her.

And after they took the information from Cecelia,

‘They will eradicate her.’

It was a natural process to erase the trail.

The death of Cecelia wouldn’t be a problem at all.

However, information related Ian, such as that the boy called Ian Page knew the existence of coldwalker and knew most of their lists.

Ian had to stop that.

CHAPTER 42

DISTINGUISH TO THE EMPIRE (1)

'I never imagined myself infiltrating another country's Ivory Tower.'

Most of the mages headed to The Ivory Tower.

And 'Daniel,' a Coldwalker assassin, sneaked into the Ivory Tower.

He was very nervous.

He was inside of another country's Ivory Tower.

Although only a few of the 1st and 2nd class mages were left, he wouldn't have a chance of surviving confronting them face to face.

Even though he was a skilled assassin, he couldn't do anything in that case.

'Look at what we all did to make this tiny chance.'

They dared to make a terrorist attack on the Greenriver Empire's Royal Palace. For this mission, they had to stop all intelligence activities and recall all of their spies who infiltrated into Greenriver by any cost.

Cecelia's failure was that much of a serious problem to them.

There were so many suspicious things about Cecelia's arrest.

They had to figure out what happened to her so that they could decide on their plan.

'Let's try to focus on mana traps for now.'

A narrow path to the dark side of Ivory Tower.

And mana traps were installed along the track.

If possible, he wanted to stop its function by capturing the control room, but time was short. As was trained, he had to proceed by dodging or neutralizing it. And that's why his country chose him who was the expert on it.

'A piece of cake for me.'

The assassin, Daniel, quickly proceeded by dodging or deceiving the mana traps.

He was a specialist in it. Mana traps couldn't stop him unless any guard disrupted him.

“Phew!”

The mana prison where Cecelia was kept locked up was the lowest floor of the jail. After Daniel had arrived there, he breathed a sigh of relief, while knocking the wall of the mana prison.

“Who’s there...?”

Cecelia’s face was full of alertness. The opponent was covering his face with a mask and hood. It could be a trial of the Ivory Tower, so she had to be careful.

“It’s me, sister.”

A young man’s voice.

Cecelia quickly recognized him and made an uncomfortable face.

“Daniel?”

“You guess well, still.”

The assassin lowered his mask and hood.

His face was covered with makeup, like a prostitute

And the makeup was melting off because of his sweat.

It wasn’t a pleasant sight to see.

“Tell me, you have something to say to me, right?”

“I, I haven’t said anything!”

The first words from her were, of course, self-defense.

It was true, though. She hadn’t said anything.

Even that she didn’t meet a man with a mask.

Whatever she said, they would ask her to explain these mana inscriptions.

So, she chose to be silent.

While she was earning some time by silence, her home country would take some action.

“I know. But not that.”

“R, release me first! I will report straight...”

“Of course I will. But we have to move separated, don’t we? And I will arrive there first, of course.”

To report as soon as he arrives, he asked her to give information to him first. That's what Daniel wanted, and was the right decision. He had to report first, so his country could make some plan.

"T, the boy, Ian Page... He knows everything."

"What?"

"The existence of the Coldwalkers, and lists of us."

"...Is that right?"

The youngest Archmage was the source of this event, as expected. Not just Daniel, but everyone who knew the existence of the Coldwalkers thought in same. However, they didn't expect this much. How did he know their lists as well?

"Furthermore, He already knew about the mana inscriptions, that I hadn't known about."

"Most of us heard it recently. Headquarter finally told us about it."

In whatever point of view, Ian was more than they ever imagined. It was a serious issue for them.

"So, any other information?"

"That's all. We don't have a time for a chat, do we? Can we please leave now?"

"Hmm, so it is."

After nodding, Daniel opened the door of mana prison.

Cecelia's face turned bright.

With few more steps, she could use magic, finally.

Unlike other trained spies, she had a stronger survival desire.

"Ah, Cecelia."

"Now wh..."

Cecelia's voice had stopped.

Due to a knife penetrating her thin neck.

She was still in the mana prison so she was no more than an average lady.

She couldn't have any magical reactions, nor treatment.

Cough!

Cecelia laid down while holding her bleeding neck.
While smiling, Daniel lowered his body to her eye level.

“Our bosses debated about you for a long time. About the fact that you are a 3rd class mage, so wouldn’t it be better to rescue you.”

While saying that, he wiped blood on his knife with Cecelia’s cloth.

“And this is the conclusion of the debate. Remember where we are, it is better not risk our mission for you.”

Soon, the wall would close firmly, and soldiers would block every exits.
Cecelia was very bad at running and sneaking, so she was no more than a burden.
Even her magic couldn’t help her for this.

“So why you didn’t practice harder. You got the lowest score marks among us.”
“Ehhhhh.....!”

“I already knew you would end up like this when you were arrogant with your mighty magic.”

Daniel stood up.

There were so much more mocking he wanted to do, but he had no time.

“So, see you later. Goodbye.”

“And you too.”

“...?”

A sudden voice of the third person.
With instinct, Daniel tried jumped away to cover his body.

“Who are...!”

However, it was a meaningless struggle.
Already frozen energy was gathered under Daniel’s foot.
And its energy froze the air and stuck his foot to the ground.

“Y, you...?”

A little boy, and magic.

With this fact, he could guess who it was.

So he was the boy. Mage Ian Page.

'Did he arrived this fast? From the fashionable society? Wait, most of all... '

An essential talent of assassins is erasing any trail as an assassin, and catching a sign of movement and a trail.

Daniel was one of the best among the Coldwalkers.

However, he couldn't recognize Ian's approach.

"It's been an older hobby of yours than I imagined. I mean, making up like a lady. Thanks to that, it helped me to recognize you."

"You, who are you? How do you...?"

"So you already killed Cecelia?"

"Are you the one who escaped from us? Or..."

"Well done. You accomplished one of my wishes."

Daniel kept asking and questioning.

However, Ian didn't answer any of his.

He came here just to accomplish his goal.

"So now..."

"W, wait! You better capture me alive!"

"I waited for this moment for long. Finally, I can kill you with my very hand."

"...What?"

"Finally, I can avenge my comrades."

"I hadn't killed any comrades..."

"None, yet. Of course."

A freezing energy started to climb Daniel's body.

From his thigh, waist, abdomen, chest and to his fingers.

"There is still ten years left for that to happen."

"Gahhhh...!"

Daniel struggled desperately.

It wasn't an instinct of survive.

A regret that he couldn't be able to relay information to his country.

He was different from Cecelia.

Unmatched by his characteristics, he was a perfectly trained dog by his country.

“Just think like this. In a previous time, you killed my comrades.”

Soon the ice reached the chin, and finally his head.

Daniel's whole body were frozen.

“Now it's your turn to be killed.”

Daniel couldn't understand what Ian was saying.

Forever.

“That's fair, isn't it?”

After a while, Ian tapped the ice block.

Soon, it started to crack.

Daniel's body was released from the ice block.

It was a glimpse of a moment that he was frozen.

However, his body left no blood at all.

‘Let's see.’

Ian started to check Daniel's corpse.

To eradicate any dangerous items that will be of threat to Ian later.

Such as the order of the Coldwalkers, or any other similar articles.

Fortunately, there were no such things.

‘And his mana inscription was...’

Daniel's mana inscription was located under the right shoulder.

When Ian found it, mages arrived in the prison.

Other mages heard that Ian had headed to the Ivory Tower.

Since the tower lord had to the left at the royal palace, archmage Ronan brought others as the leader.

“This... What is going on here?”

Cecelia's corpse which was laying down on the floor as holding her neck.

A corpse of a mysterious man.
Ronan wanted Ian to explain this situation.

“Why Cecelia is... and who is this man?”

Ian didn’t reply.



A massive storm had passed the Greenriver Empire.
The first thing was the mana inscription test for the citizens of the whole Empire.
Literally, the ‘whole’ members of the empire was the target of the test.
From every low-rank people to royalties.
For every people in every province. It was an order of the Emperor.
The treatment was a bit late, but it had to be done.

“Already two members of the royal palace are missing! One maid and the royal secretary! While they are manipulating this empire, what have you done? Tower Lord. Answer! You asked me to give authority of this matter to the Ivory Tower, you said you would find out these spies, didn’t you?”

The Emperor’s fury was headed straight to the Ivory Tower.
The Ivory Tower was uniquely allowed to investigate Cecelia.
However, they didn’t figure out anything. Instead, they almost let these spies make contact.
And it seemed other spies were manipulating around to plant bombs.
The Tower Lord had nothing to say about it.

“I cannot trust the Ivory Tower’s capacity anymore, so I retake all their authority of the investigation from this moment. Hence, from now on, give the Imperial Army any information you have collected. Do you understand?”

The royalty and the Ivory Tower were supposed to be balanced as a parallel mutual relationship.
However, for now, the Ivory Tower had no such power.
The royalty had every reason and power.
The Ivory Tower had to submit for this time.

“As you command, your highness.”

The council was filled with the Emperor, the Crown Prince and every liege men. And in the middle of the council, the Tower Lord Herbert gently received the Emperor's order.

“Be gone. You must have many things to do.”

With strong face, the Emperor returned the Tower Lord. The parallel relationship wasn't easy to be maintained. Sometimes he had to treat them as a friend, but sometimes as a political enemy. It was a balanced game that only the Emperor could do.

‘I wish he could catch what I am doing here.’

The Emperor briefly looked down the seat of the Crown Prince, located at the right under of the Emperor's seat.

The Crown Prince was smiling like innocent children. It seemed he was just excited that the Ivory Tower got revoked.

‘..... Still far to go.’

After sighed, the Emperor started the next topic. The Ivory Tower was the most responsible for this event. However, it was also the Ivory Tower who distinguished themselves to the empire mostly. Precisely, the youngest Archmage of the Ivory Tower.

“Mage Ian Page, come out and bow to the Emperor, his highness.”

With the voice of an inner coffin, a boy entered the council room. He wore immaculate clothes and made his hair very gently. It was the second time that the Archmage Ian Page had been called.

“Good to see you again, Ian Page.”

Opposite to the Tower Lord, the Emperor welcomed Ian warmly. The Emperor Terry Greenriver said to Ian.

“Before we start this topic, I will give you a chance to explain to everyone. As we

received the report, there might be someone who wanted to hear it directly. Can you summarize what happened there?"

From the fashionable society to the prison of the Ivory Tower.

What had happened, and what Ian had thought and why he had taken action.

The Emperor was asking that.

Of course, everyone in the council already knew the details.

The Emperor was just giving Ian a chance to appeal himself.

"Of course, your highness."

"Then tell me. What had happened at the night?"

CHAPTER 43

DISTINGUISH TO THE EMPIRE (2)

“Then tell me. What had happened at night?”

By the request of the Emperor, Ian took a breath.

He started his report, which only contained a story that would be of benefit to Ian. A perfectly manipulated story, so that wouldn't cause any suspicion about Ian.

“At night, it was right after the sun had set. Suddenly, continuous explosion sounds were heard. Since one of the sound had come from the ballroom, I rushed to the room and protected the Crown Prince, princess and my mother with my shield. Soon, Sir Oliver and I found something suspicious. Firstly, the scale of explosions were too small to damage the royal palace directly. Secondly.....”

Ian continued his story.

Most of his story was based on facts.

Except that he already knew the existence of the Coldwalkers.

Without that critical fact, he summarized the situation.

“...Although we had suspected the situation, we couldn't decide any further action. When I said it to the Crown Prince, he ordered me to chase the suspicious clues...”

It wasn't on the previous report.

Suddenly, everyone looked at the Crown Prince.

‘D, did I?’

The Crown Prince also looked embarrassed.

He never did it.

‘Did..... I order him to?’

The night was full of confusion.

Maybe he forgot that fact due to the confusion?

“Prince.”

“Did I really d...?”

“Prince!”

“Y, yes! Father!”

“Is it true?”

“Yes?”

“I am asking you, did you order Ian to do so?”

It had to be confirmed by the Crown Prince.

Every talk in this council was recorded as a document.

Numberless liege men were listening.

Naturally, they would say what they heard here outside.

Which meant, it was chance.

‘An easy chance which was given to the Emperor’

A good chance to solidify the relationship between the Crown Prince and Ian.

With a shiny eye, the Emperor looked at the Crown Prince.

With a short hesitation, the Crown Prince opened his mouth.

“I, I thin..... Y, yes, that’s right!”

With the Crown Prince’s reply, the council room was swayed for a moment.

It wasn’t a negative reaction though.

They were just surprised.

That Crown Prince really did?

“Stop.”

The Emperor had let them talk each other for a moment.

Then with his order, everyone became quiet again.

“Although the Crown Prince had ordered Ian to do so, obviously It was Ian Page who distinguished himself to the empire the most. Without him, we would let our unknown enemies steal our precious information, and we would be laughed by the whole world.”

When the liege men were listening the word ‘laugh’, they turned down their head for

shame.

“Since Ian Page has prevented such tragedy at an early stage, I will never forgot what he did for us. For this time, I would like to reward him by my very hand.”

It meant the Emperor wouldn’t ask Ian for his reward.

“The reward I will give is.”

Quickly, maids and servants started to move quickly.
Ian already had been rewarded gold and a mansion before.
Since what he distinguished himself with last night was quite the huge one, he would be rewarded by something better.
With that Ian was excited.

“This.”

It was a robe.
New, the robe with cobalt blue color had no wrinkles on it.
It wasn’t decorated luxuriously, but it had some precious aura.

“The robe is my ancestor’s, who was the only mage of royal blood, Michell Greenriver’s only inheritance. Originally, It is not supposed to be given to non royal blood. Actually, I better say I lend it to you, rather than give it to you.”

As he explained. Even Ian wouldn’t have that much chance to see it in former life.
The first and last mage of royalty.
The one who was talented in magic, so became the Tower Lord.

‘ The robe of Michell Greenriver’

In former life, Ian had received various treasure of royalty.
Nevertheless, he couldn’t have ever had a chance to see it directly.
It was a testament that they didn’t reward it to non royal blood.

“Duration of lending will be, until Ian Page is deceased. Or, until you don’t want to possess it anymore.”

But the Emperor broke the testament, by excusing he was ‘lending’ it to Ian.

It was an unusual reward.

“Try it on. You wouldn’t need to take off your clothes since its robe.”

With the Emperor’s order, maids helped Ian put it on.

The problem was its size was way too big for Ian.

The size of robe was designed for adult, but Ian was still a young boy.

Nevertheless, the Emperor still wanted him to put it on.

“It’s okay, please just put it on to me.”

It was hilarious to watch Ian with an unfitted robe.

It looked like a kid who tried his father’s clothes.

Liege men turned their face away to stop laughing.

“It’s quite big for you. How long will it take to fit on your body?”

The Emperor joked to Ian.

Soon Ian realized the true meaning of his joke.

After he wore it, he could feel it.

One of the spells that was casted on Michell Greenriver’s robe.

“I will fit it straightly.”

Ian injected his mana to the robe slowly.

Soon, a surprising thing happened.

The robe, filled with mana, started to stick on Ian’s body.

In addition, it started to worm around by itself.

As if it measuring scale of its new owner’s body.

Whirr – !

With a small noise of extracting mana.

Michell Greenriver’s robe started to change.

Its length, width and size, and everything else was changed for the young owner.

“Wow...”

“How could it happen...?”

Without dignity, the liege men started to admire it.
The Crown Prince stood up straight and watched Ian as well.
It was such a rare scene.

“It suits you better than I had thought. Especially its blue color”

A light impression from the Emperor.
Ian now could feel something clearly.
Every power of the robe of Michell Greenriver.
It was much more than Ian had ever imagined.

‘So this might be the reason why he left a testament to not reward it to a stranger.’

Satisfied, Ian fixed his sleeves and collar.
While bowing to the Emperor, Ian said.

“I appreciate your grace, your majesty.”



Ian’s second meeting with the Emperor.
The council meeting ended well.

‘It is an amazing robe indeed.’

The robe kept whispering to Ian.
Ian wanted to check its power quickly.

‘I can feel a few formulas.’

Clearly, it was some specific ‘formulas’.
It tempted Ian greatly.
He couldn’t help himself but to test its power.

‘It has been long since I feel excitement.’

It was an unexpected luck.
For a while, he would focus on investigating this robe.
A mysterious robe that he hadn’t seen in his former life.

There must be many things to investigate.

“Hmm?”

At the moment, there was someone who was caught in Ian’s eyes.

A lady who was watching Ian from far distance.

It was the princess, Hyree Greenriver.

‘It seems she still feels uncomfortable.’

Yet, nobody knew she was a mage.

When the mages of the Ivory Tower had arrived, she had already spent her whole mana, so the shield was gone. It was a too high class spell for her to maintain it for long.

‘And injecting mana isn’t that much of a sight taking action.’

The room was full of confusion.

Nobody found out what exactly the princess had done.

Even the Crown Prince and Vanessa who was very next to her.

‘It is not my business.’

The reason she was watching Ian was obvious.

The princess hid her magical talent on purpose.

She was learning magic, while hiding it to the Ivory Tower.

If it revealed, it was one of the most heavy crimes.

And ‘Ian’ knew the fact.

The boy who was one of the Ivory Tower members.

The 12th arch mage.

‘She chose to be.’

Ian had no idea why she had hidden it.

Of course, he wasn’t interested in it.

It was time wasting for Ian to care about what happened to the princess.

‘But,’

Ian gathered mana on his right finger.
With index finger, Ian drew something on the air.
Since it was quite small gesture, no one realized it.

‘I can do this for her, at least.’

By his gesture, the mana was shimmering.
And Ian sent it to the princess.
By riding the wind, a chunk of mana had been sent to the princess.
Soon, it had been released on the princess’ face.
It was blue letters, formed by mana.

[You don’t need to worry about last night.]

The biggest relief that Ian could do for her.
The princess looked more comfortable.
It seemed to be enough for her.

‘Now I had to do...’

Of course, testing the robe of Michell Greenriver.
With excitement, Ian left the royal palace.
Suddenly, a few people blocked Ian’s path.
Ian expected the Crown Prince and his knights.

“You did very well.”

Ian’s expectation was wrong this time.
It wasn’t the Crown Prince.

“Good job, sir Ian.

A young, but familiar voice. A unique gentle manner.
The royalty, who Ian didn’t want to confront yet.

‘.....?’

By instinct, Ian turned up his head.
To check the source of the voice.

It was a boy who seemed around two years older than Ian, who had the blond hair of royal blood.

‘Ragnar’

It was the bastard.

Ian had avoided to confront him intentionally.

If he could avoid him, he avoided him, and if he could hide, he hid.

For today, he didn’t pay attention due to the new robe.

If he knew about it, he would’ve chosen a different path.

“Thanks to you, the royalty and the whole empire’s peace were kept still. As my father told you, You were the hero of the event. I was looking forward to meet you and say thank you, as a member of royalty. Ah! I forgot to introduce myself. I’m sure you already know me, though.”

A confrontation with Ragnar earlier than his former life. In his former life, When Ian became 14 years old, and when the academy started to call him a genius, he came to meet Ian. So 2 years earlier than before.

“Let me introduce myself. I am the 5th prince of the mighty Emperor, Ragnar Greenriver.”

A worried moment had come finally.

Ian used to worry about this moment.

What should I say to Ragnar?

Would I be able to hide my killing intent?

“I want to serve a meal for our hero, do you have time?”

However, Ian’s body reacted in unexpected way.

He became more calmed than usual, rather than his heart beating anxiously.

Ian could clearly see Ragnar’s white face.

His offer sounded dry to Ian.

It wasn’t killing intent that Ian had to hide.

He had to prevent himself from laughing.

‘He’s such a kid.’

30 years later, Ragnar Greenriver would become a mighty and cold blooded Emperor. However, look at his current appearance.
He was just a young prince who had to hide his ambition.
A boy who didn't have much power, but wanted to.
A young boy who was living his daily life by enduring his desire for power.

'How puny.'

That was all what Ian had thought.
Not angry, not anxious, nor love and hate.
A puny 5th prince.
A boy, whose life could be ruined by Ian at any time.
Now Ian finally concluded his method of revenge.

"No thanks. I already have a schedule."

Ian refused Ragnar's offer without hesitation.
Still, Ragnar was smiling.

"I don't mind to have a meal with you later. So when will you be..."
"Sorry, not in future as well."

Now, Ragnar's face lost smile for a moment.
He quickly rearranged his facial emotions though.

"May I ask you for reason?"
"Too busy. I am."

Although he was 5th prince, he was one of royalty members.
If others reacted so, it was an unforgivable arrogance.

"Busy... a lot?"
"Yes. Many things to do."

However, Ian was Archmage.
In addition, the Archmage who was favored by the Emperor and the Crown Prince.
Although Ragnar was a prince, he couldn't punish him.

".....I guess I wasted your time for nothing."

"Yes you did. Excuse me then."

After short bow, Ian passed by Ragnar.
His body guards grumbled, and Ragnar was watching Ian's back.
Although Ian could feel everything, Ian didn't care about it.

"This time, I will be on your very opposite side.'

In former life, Ian was ally of Ragnar.
An ally who was the strongest and the nearest.
However, this life will be different.
Ian decided to oppose him.

'You won't able to proceed any single step.'

All those plans of Ragnar.
Ian will block every single of those plans, by his hand.
Every time Ragnar failed, he would hear the name, Ian Page.
At last, he would damn Ian and fall.

'Until he desperately wanted to erase my very existence in the world.'

But Ian would be one who couldn't be defeated by Ragnar.
The 'ultimate evil' to Ragnar.

'Only for you.'

After Ian passed by Ragnar and his bodyguards, Ian cleared his mind.
Ian started to assemble his mana.
The first formulae that Michell's robe whispered to Ian.
Ian wanted to see what would happen.

'Fly'

Originally, fly was inefficient spell.
Short duration, extremely slow flight speed.
The robe whispered such formulae.
Why?

Flap!

As he activated the formulae,
The robe flapped roughly.
There were no wind blowing.

‘Can it be real?’

Normal fly spell was supposed to let Ian fly with slow speed.
And that was the standard theory.

Whirrr – !

And the theory was just broken.
Ian raised to the sky rapidly.

‘More than I have imagined.’

An artifact that he couldn’t have had a chance to see.
The power of Michell Greenriver’s robe.
Although he only tasted a portion of it, his heart started to beat.

‘There must be more artifacts like this.’

He wasn’t just limiting the area to the empire.
In the whole world, there must be some.
Unknown makers, unknown creations to date.
A legendary artifacts must be out there somewhere.

‘No more former life.’

In former life, Ian was crazed about magic, and he was satisfied by what Ragnar had provided.
However, the situation had changed. If he wanted, and decided,

‘I can find it.’

And he could possess it.
An artifact that has similar power to the robe of Michell Greenriver,

Or maybe even stronger ones.

‘I can be even stronger than I used to be in my former life.’

In magical power, but also in political power as well.
It would take some time, but it was possible.

‘But.’

On the other side, he had question.
Would he need such overwhelming power?
To survive in this life? For revenge?
During the time Ian was thinking about these answerless thoughts,
His body had arrived at the mansion.
Through the window, he could see familiar faces.
Mother who had passed quite early in former life.
Ledio who was supposed to be killed by raids.
Douglas who was supposed to be Ian’s vital enemy.

‘No one was waiting for me in my former life.’

There was no one who waiting for Ian, nor Ian had to protect.
However, It was different this time.
There were some people who were waiting for him.
In addition, there were some people who he had to protect.

‘A power to protect.’

A power that could save his people by any circumstance
Even though the world began to fall, or an unimaginably strong enemy appears.

‘There is never enough for such power.’

That was Ian’s conclusion.
The more power he yields, the safer his people will be.

‘I will be stronger, until my body cannot hold on, until the maximum.’

An even more determined decision than he used to have right after he just rewound

the time.

From since then, 5 years had passed

CHAPTER 44

5 YEAR LATER (1)

“Hmm.”

The most refreshing spot in the royal library.

It was the area where only the Crown Prince was allowed to enter.

It was the only library that contained books that were related to the ‘imperialism’, and other princes couldn’t read such books. Learning of ruling the empire was only allowed for the Crown Prince.

“Hmmmm!”

The Crown Prince, who just became 23 years old, ‘Hayden Greenriver’ was learning it as other former Crown Princes did. From morning, he was learning foundations of reigning the empire. Although he supposed to finish these books when he was 15 years old, it was his best. He started this learning at a late age.

“So... Most people don’t know how to read, so does that mean they are fools? What crap? What’s wrong about not knowing how to read? This book is so mean.”

Furthermore, he was misunderstanding what the books were saying to him.

He was still the same since he was 5 years old.

At least now, he read some books.

“Never mind! It is not a day for reading,”

The Crown Prince closed the book straightly.

Immediately, he stood up and left the library.

“Your highness.”

The high rank servant of the royal palace, ‘Teo’, and ‘Paul’, the Vice Captain of the second royal knights approached to the Crown Prince.

“Your highness, aren’t you suppose to read the book for one hour?”

“I am, but I’m not in the mood.”

“But you promised the Emperor...”

“Don’t worry, I will read more tomorrow. Actually, I will read it this afternoon.”

“But...”

The servant couldn’t say anything anymore.

He also knew, that it was already a miracle that the Crown Prince was voluntarily reading books. The servant had seen him for 20 years, and the servant hadn’t seen him do that.

“Vice Captain, today is the day, right?”

“What day you mean?”

“The last duel between the Captain and Ian.”

“Ah, yes it is.”

The Duel of Ian and the Captain.

They had done it for 5 years.

If they didn’t have any special occasion, they dueled once per week. From early morning to morning.

“They must be in the climax.”

It was their last day of dueling.

The Crown Prince didn’t want to miss such a moment.

It was the last duel of his left and right arm.

“Let’s go. I haven’t seen it for months.”

They were dueling at the gymnasium of the second royal knight headquarters.

With excitement, the Crown Prince was walking to the place.

“Whenever I see it, the Captain always got stomped. How about these days? Is he doing better? Or is it the same as before? If it’s same, I better go when they are about to finish. I feel sorry for him.”

The Crown Prince asked the Vice Captain, Paul.

It was 1 year ago when the Crown Prince saw their last duel.

At that moment, Oliver couldn’t even approach Ian Page, the mighty Archmage.

“I have no idea.”

“What, how do you not know? Aren’t you the Vice Captain?”

“The last one you saw was my last time as well.”

“...I see.”

While dueling, Oliver couldn’t bodyguard the Crown Prince.

So the Vice Captain had to bodyguard him, instead of Oliver. So, since the Crown Prince hadn’t visited the dueling, the Vice Captain couldn’t see their duel as well.

“But still, anything you have heard?”

“He usually doesn’t talk much.”

“Well, that’s right.”

The Crown Prince admitted that quickly.

They arrived near the second royal knight headquarter.

From a distance, the Crown Prince was already able to hear a noise.

The noise caused by the conflict of two mighty powers.

“Hew...”

The second royal knight gymnasium.

A man with a plate armor, Oliver, who became middle aged, breathed deeply.

They had started the duel for hours already, he was preparing his last assault.

‘This is my last chance.’

Oliver was holding a training iron sword.

His best swords were already destroyed but he realized that he didn’t need a good sword to against a mage. Unless it wan an artifact level sword.

‘I won’t make a mistake.’

Oliver focused by encouraging himself.

Hundreds of icicles had appeared, pointing to his head from above.

It must’ve been spells that were casted by the young man with brown long hair, who was standing at the opposite side of gymnasium.

Actually, it was just a small portion of his power.

“Gwaaaaa!”

With a battle cry, Oliver dashed to the side.
Approaching in straight line was easily blocked by opponent’s magic.
Actually, approaching from the side didn’t change the result that much either.
But Oliver did it to increase his slight chance.

Crack! Crakckck! Craccck!

Hundreds of icicles were falling.
Many icicles that missed the target drilled down the floor.
Some icicles that landed correctly were deflected by cheap iron sword.
However, the sword didn’t get cracked nor destroyed.

“Hup!”

Oliver suddenly twisted his body and change the direction.
Why did he do that? It was for a simple reason.

*Grrrrrr... *

The floor where Oliver was heading to, was erupted and raised and block the path.
Literally, he ‘barely’ dodged it.
If he didn’t change the direction, he definitely would’ve ran into the pillar and been knocked down.
It was a clear instinct that was taught by dueling with Ian for 5years.

‘Next is,’

But it wasn’t the end of young mage’s attack.
It was just the beginning of it.

‘Heat.’

Oliver moved his eyes to the side where he could feel heat.
There was a pair of giant hand-shaped fires that were targeting Oliver and smashing the ground.

Smash – !

After he dodged swiftly,

Smash – ! Smash – !

An additional two fire fists were generated.

Not only that, it started to smash the ground randomly.

Thanks to that, the floor of gymnasium destroyed every time.

“Those fire fists will disappear soon.”

He already had experienced it many times. He didn’t need to care about it anymore. Before the opponent casted next spell, Oliver had to approach closer to him.

Without hesitation, Oliver rushed towards the mage. Soon, fire fists that were chasing him burned out. As he expected, actually, as he experienced.

Spark – !

Electric lashes were stretched towards Oliver’s face.

He easily dodged it by spinning his body.

However, a strong freezing energy that was already on the floor, the freezing grasps that were aiming Oliver’s ankle were hard to dodge. If he let it catch him, it was the end of the duel.

“No way!”

He quickly decided to give up his iron sword. Instead of his ankle, he let the freezing grasps hold the iron sword. Oliver threw away the half frozen sword without hesitation. He drew another sword from his waist.

Srrrrung!

There were only few steps left to reach the mage with the blue robe.

Would he make it this time?

‘I can reach him.’

With a firm faith, he stepped forward.
A giant fire sphere blocked his path.
Actually, it tried to.

‘I can cut it.’

The swordsman who cut down the fire sphere that was formed by mana.
5 years ago, there were no such swordsmen that existed.
But,

Slash!

Not anymore.
Such swordsman now existed in the world.
The captain of the second royal knight order, Oliver Raywood.
The bodyguard of the Crown Prince was the swordsman.
With a glimpse of the slashed fire sphere, Oliver could see clearly.
A young mage who was standing without making a single move.

“Hiyaaaaap!”

A goal he had desired since 5 years ago.
Oliver shouted to achieve his goal.
A shining iron sword was aiming for the heart of the mage.
It was his finishing move that was containing the very essence of his dueling.

Perk!

The iron sword penetrated without any pauses.
The attack landed successfully.
A great achievement that took 5 years for Oliver.

‘...’

However, Oliver didn’t smile.

There was no blood on his sword.

Also, Oliver couldn't feel his sword slashing the enemy clearly.

‘Mirror Image.’

A illusion spell that duplicated the appearance of a mage's body.
It wasn't the main body of the mage, but the ‘Mirror Image’ that got penetrated.

“Bravo, you did very well.”

While saying that, Ian pressed Oliver's back with his finger.
It was Ian Page, a young mage who became 17 years old this year.

“Finally I couldn't even have a single touch on your body.”

Oliver couldn't sense Ian's main body.
If it was real battle, Oliver was already a dead man.
Oliver could approach Ian successfully, but he couldn't reach Ian.

“Remember that you almost killed me by penetrating my heart...”

Ian's voice had deepened as much as his height had grown up.
He grew up taller, and his face became more mature.
He had impressive long hair.

“Whenever I got injured by you, it would be my next death.”

Ian said.

From since 5 years ago, dueling with Oliver was quite exciting. Although Ian didn't use his full power, he had to use much more power than he had expected. Furthermore, Oliver became stronger day by day.

‘It is irony that I call others as monster, but...’

Oliver was definitely a monster. If he was mage, his talent and effort could've led him to become a great mage, as great as Ian.

“Thank you for dueling me.”

Oliver bowed to Ian politely.

He received great help. By dueling, he overcame his limitation.
Although he couldn't touch Ian's body.

"I just paid for the necklace."
"I received more worth than that."
"I can see that."

Ian quickly recalled today's duel.
He recalled that Oliver, who was slashing down fire.
Wasn't it something that could only be heard in fantasy story?

"A knight who can slash down fire. I better tell him this..."
"I beg your pardon?"
"Nothing. I just know a man who write books."

After Ian's weird reply, Oliver asked.

"Can I ask you something?"
"Of course."
"How high of a level have you achieved?"

5 years had passed already.
As Oliver had become stronger than 5 years ago, so must've Ian.

"Not as much as you'd expect."

By Oliver's question, Ian smiled with bitterness.
Of course he grew up very fast.
Ian achieved unfathomable growth.

'5th class Master'

Ian achieved becoming a 5th class mage.
Furthermore, there were only few mages who achieved becoming a 'Master'.
Considering that he was 17 years old, his growth speed was unimaginable. In his former life, he reached the very beginning of the 5th class when he became 26 years old.

'But still, it's slower than I imagined.'

5 years has passed.

He had aimed to reach at least 6th class Master.

However, his goal was ruined by an unexpected barrier.

‘A fundamental limitation of my body.’

Although Ian was talented, Ian couldn’t enhance the growth rate of his body, and the growth speed of his mana heart. Who had ever imagined? With an immature mana heart, 5th class Master was the limitation.

‘It was impossible to be achieved.’

Overcoming 5th class even before his body finished growing?

It had never happened before in history.

Of course there was no record, so there was no experience.

‘I must be the first.’

It was like sailing through an unknown ocean.

It didn’t feel that bad.

He just wanted his body to mature quickly.

“Bravo! Of course! Here is the best mage and swordsman of the empire!”

While Ian was thinking deeply,

A handsome man with golden white hair entered with applause.

A man not affected by age.

It was the Crown Prince, Hayden.

“Your highness.”

“The Crown Prince highness.”

Ian and Oliver bowed to him shortly.

He hadn’t showed himself that much for a year.

What brought him here today?

“As I heard, today is the last day for the both of you.”

“Indeed. It will be busy year for me.”

By Ian’s reply, the Crown Prince clapped his hands.

“That’s right. Let’s have a morning meal together. For my right and left arm’s endless development. How boud dat?”

The Crown Prince’s eyes were only looking towards Ian. Oliver wouldn’t refuse his favor anyway.

“I am really sorry, but.”

However, Ian had a schedule. As today was the last day of dueling with Oliver, another ‘last day’ was awaiting Ian.

“It is my last day for my individual lessons from the Ivory Tower.”

“The Ivory Tower?”

“Today, I receive my first duty as an Archmage, so...”

“Ah! That’s right.”

Today was Ian’s last day of individual lessons from the Ivory Tower, that was replacing academy curriculum. From today, Ian would become an Archmage and a ‘duty holder’. Since he was ‘student’, he didn’t have to do any of his duty. However, the situation had changed.

“So that’s why you are going to be busy for this year.”

The Crown Prince nodded, as he admitted. Ian’s ‘conquering the Ivory Tower’ project finally had begun. At least, the Crown Prince thought in that way.

“Well I guess you have no choice.”

“I am really sorry for that.”

“You say sorry too much.”

As it was nothing to worry, the Crown Prince shook his hands.

He had endless trust in Ian.

It was a solid relationship that was built from 5 years.

“Go and do what you have to do. Let’s have a meal later.”

“I will make time as soon as possible.”

Ian bowed to the Crown Prince.
He also said bye to Oliver simply.

“Excuse me then.”

Ian’s robe started to flap.
Soon, he rose to the sky rapidly.
When they saw it the first time, they were freaking out.

Not just the Crown Prince, but Oliver as well.
How could a man fly to the sky freely?
However, they weren’t surprised now.
They had seen it enough.

“See you soon.”

Ian disappeared quickly.
It seemed as if he flew faster than before.
As fast as an eagle.

“At least, that’s what I feel jealous about. I wish I could fly like that. Like a bird. Wait, isn’t he faster than bird?”

The Crown Prince murmured as he felt jealous.

“Captain.”
“Yes my lord.”
“As I saw it briefly, you fought quite well with Ian, right? How is it now? Can you now fight against a mage?”

Hearing his question, Oliver made a slight smile.

“I can give you two answers.”
“Two?”
“Firstly, I concluded that I won’t have any chance to injure Sir Ian.”

It was honest, that may damage his pride. However, Oliver seemed calm. He had

experienced Ian's power for 5 years, and he admitted Ian's power enough times.

"And I think this gap will grow larger and larger"

"Is that so?"

"Yes it is."

The Crown Prince had expected this kind of answer.

However, he didn't ever think that Oliver wouldn't be able to touch Ian now and forever.

"However, for other mages."

Oliver continued his words.

And this time, his voice was full of confidence.

"Yes, I can dare to defeat them."

CHAPTER 45

5 YEAR LATER (2)

“Sir Ian!”

At the hall of entrance of the Ivory Tower, Ian had arrived.
It was always full of passion of the young mages.
Between 5 years, there were many new faces.

“Oh, you’ve come. Today is your last day, isn’t it?”
“Your good days are gone, sir Ian.”
“Wouldn’t they give you hard work since you are still young?”

The most different thing compared to 5 years was the atmosphere.
Especially, people’s attitude to Ian had changed a lot.
They didn’t envy or look at him with jealousy.
Most of them liked Ian sincerely. Unlike other Archmages, he didn’t try to rule them with authority.

“I have no choice. I’m the youngest.”
“Usually, age doesn’t matter in the Ivory Tower, does it? Whoever is better at magic is higher, isn’t it? I am actually older than you if you want to mention age.”

Lyla who just became an official mage made a joke with Ian fearlessly. To other Archmages, her action was quite rude.

“Haha, I will remember that.”

Ian was forming a new power by gathering young blood.
And this project was going swiftly.
Many people followed Ian. Not only young mages, but also some old mages supported Ian.
Ian was the new core of the Ivory Tower.

“Then, see you later.”

Ian stepped on the golden disk.

Now, he looked quite natural with it.

Actually, it suited with him more than any other in the Ivory Tower.

“So if you guys want to take this disk, work harder ~ haha.”

Ian pointed the golden disk.

And after Ian’s joke,

“Booo!”

Young mages at the first floor booed him him.

Archmages who joked with other mages, and mages who reacted with it.

It was an extremely rare scene in the history of Ivory Tower.

“Oh, you have come.”

The lift arrived at the Tower Lord’s room.

It was the Tower Lord Harbert, who was in charge of the last individual lesson.

His face didn’t change much even though it already 5 years had passed.

“I recall the day when I heard first. It feels like it has only been a few days ago that I heard a great boy had appeared at the northern side. Now you grew up to become a young man from a kid, haha.”

The Tower Lord usually put a mask on his face, but what he just said was his true impression for today.

He was getting old as time flowed on.

He realized its flowing whenever he saw Ian.

So he felt hurried. He had many plans to execute.

“Which means I am getting old as much as you grew.”

“I am sure you will still be healthy for more than next 10 years.”

After the greetings, the Tower Lord checked the documents.

It were the reports and results of Ian’s individual lessons.

“Outstanding. Every reports are compliments of you.”

The Ivory Tower taught Ian in a very biased way.

Especially, for the Ivory Tower's history, duty and mind attitude was almost procedure of brain washing. From beginning to end, It was full of the reasons and excuses why Ian had to be loyal to the Ivory Tower. And Ian followed the curriculum and granted very nice marks. Except that he hanged around with the crown prince, he was one of the perfect members of the Ivory Tower.

“What great luck you are for the empire and the Ivory Tower. No doubt why other young mages follow you. You are like a walking textbook of a perfect mage.”

There was a hidden intention in the Tower Lord's compliment.

Ian formed a new stream in the Ivory Tower.

Many young mages were following Ian.

Whether Ian did it on purpose or naturally, he became their idol.

And the Tower Lord wasn't pleased about that fact, as the highest and oldest core member of the Ivory Tower.

“Haha you make me embarrassed.”

“Hmm, you will see.”

With mysterious answer, the Tower Lord jumped over to the main topic.

“As you know, today is the last day for you. If you were a student of the academy, you would proceed through with the graduation process, and soon be sent to the other provinces. But you are a special case. Your last day of lessons will be just simple talking with this old man. Does it sound bad?”

“Not at all. It will be my honor.”

“Haha, although it's just for common manners, it makes me feel good.”

The Tower Lord brought a ‘medal’.

It was a medal which was formed by white ivory that was scripted with the ancient imperial word.

“I congratulate that you finally became a real mage and ordered to follow your duty.”

It was a medal that proves Ian is an Archmage of the Ivory Tower, but Ian couldn't grant it, nor needed it. It was only needed when the person was ordered to do the ‘duty of an Archmage’.

“In any place of the province, it will give you authority to order soldiers and people to serve as your will. You will need it a lot from now on.”

Archmages had the quite special duty unlike the others.

Summarized, their duty was ‘the ultimate problem solver.’

It was their duty to solve extremely hard problems such as natural disasters, or monster’s rampage. Hence, their duties were usually short intensive duty, and the power of medal was quite useful.

“Is there any area that needs an Archmage at the moment?”

“You don’t say it.”

The Tower Lord replied quickly as he awaited.

And Ian was ready to serve.

It wasn’t the kind of duty that he could avoid.

Since he was granted all the support an Archmage got, forever.

“We are short of hands. As you know, Helene is missing in action. I don’t want to burden you, but we desperately need your power.”

Which meant Ian had some responsibility of her being missing, so he had to do this job.

Ian the main reason why Helene is missing.

“Is there any work that I am capable of?”

“Haha. You are one of the best forces of our Ivory Tower. If you want, you are capable of anything. Please don’t underestimate yourself.”

As he saying, the Tower Lord released his mana. As reports of Ian had been illustrated in the air 5 years ago, summarized requests from every province were illustrated.

“I will give you a chance to choose since it’s your first time.”

From three provinces, they requested conducting of an Archmage.

The ‘Roadmeer province’ which contained the largest port city,

The ‘Benson Province’ which was producing the most amount of iron.

But most of all, it was the ‘Pieric province’ that pulled interest out of Ian.

‘It was the area where I was conducted in my former life.’

A 5 year conducting mission was the duty for every mage.

And it was the ‘Pieric province’ where Ian went for his conducting mission.

‘I heard that there was a huge issue before I was conducted to the area.’

That’s what Ian was memory told him.

And it seems this request was the ‘huge issue.’

‘The province is connected to the Eastern Great Grass Field.’

People used to say that ‘the Eastern Great Grass Field’ was filled with half by monsters, and the other half by aborigines.

And the province was in contact with such a dangerous area.

Since their daily life was war, it was the province which had the strongest infantry in the whole empire.

In addition, due to its wealthy ground, it was the most grain producing area.

“Pieric province sounds interesting to me.”

“It was the province where it was requested the most strongly. We already sent two 3rd class mages and imperial armies, but it seems that its not enough.”

Ian didn’t expect that much. They already had the empire best infantries, and conducted mages. Furthermore, they received extra imperial armies and even two 3rd class mages, but it was still not enough?

“It seems monsters from the Great Grass Field are on rampage.”

Monsters invasions from the Eastern Great Grass Field happened quite often.

And Pieric province people were already veterans with them.

But they were still sending such a desperate request?

As far as Ian knew, It wasn’t to that scale.

More and more Ian started to get interested.

“All the details are here, so please read it and give me an answer until today. If you don’t want to, I have to find...”

“You don’t have to. I am on the case.”

Ian already had decided.

If it was his duty, it would be easier for him to work at familiar places.

“I will go to the Pieric province.”

The first duty of Ian as an Archmage.

It was Pieric province.



After he decided that, things proceeded quickly.

Ian refused to take any bodyguards and supporting mages.

They would rather be a burden to him.

He just needed a small bag.

“Hey boss.”

Douglas, who was now 15 years old, came out of the mansion.

He still called Ian as boss.

It became a habit.

“Would you still call me boss even after you have become a grandpa?”

“No, of course not. Wait, maybe yes.”

“Ha.”

“Whatever. Here, take this.”

It was bag which was full of flasks.

It was durable flasks that were shielded by defensive magic.

“Do you remember my father’s special half elixir? I made it in my own way. Perhaps...”

While paused for a moment, Douglas looked at his father quietly.

And he whispered to Ian quickly.

“It should be much better than my father’s.”

Although he whispered, his voice was full of confidence.

His talent increased his alchemy skills rapidly.

Originally, the royal alchemy course was planned for 8 years.

He was supposed to study it for 3 more years. However, his talent was outstanding, so he already received the title of royal alchemist already. And he was still only 15 years old.

‘His talent didn’t go anywhere.’

As Ian had expected.

Talent never betrayed its owner.

‘I worried that he wouldn’t be desperate enough compared to his former life.’

Compared to his former life, Douglas wasn’t in a severe circumstance.

However, still, he grew up well and improved his talent very well.

“You sure about It that it works better?”

“Of course, Who am I? The first man of Boss! The alchemist who soon will be the best in the empire! Ian Page for the best mage! And Douglas for the best alchemist!”

“You cheeky boy.”

“Hehe.”

Today, Ian off to the Pieric province.

It was the first time Ian left his mother, since he had rewound his time.

‘I think it is first time that I move away which is out of communication orb’s range.’

During the 5 years, Ian was now finally able to control himself not to overreact about his mother’s safety. So, he didn’t worry that much about her. After the event of the spies, the city was more strict about crimes than ever. Furthermore, he was granted a favor from the royalty. Anyone would know that when they looked at the number of guards around Ian’s mansion.

“Ian.”

It was his mother.

Although many years had passed, she was still beautiful, and smiling.

She handed over some food to Ian.

“Have it while you are on travel. I prepared a lot.”

“Mom, mages never starve. Wherever I go, I will be their precious guest. Even thieves

might bow to me.”

“B, but still...”

While smiling, Ian received her food container.

It was heavy, which seemed enough for more than two days.

“The first section is the food that must be consumed by today, and the other section are food that can be eaten after a long time. Like jerky and dried fruits...”

5 years had already passed.

Now Ian looked like a grown up young man.

But to Vanessa, still, Ian was her son.

“Thanks mom.”

The burden was more than Ian had expected.

Half elixir and mom's food.

Ian needed some good carriers.

“Hmm.”

After short moment, Ian drew a summoning formula in the air.

Ian had a good solution.

A solution that only could be used by the high class Archmage.

“Conjure.”

A 5th class master's conjuring skills were on a different level compared to others.

Unlike 5 years ago, it wouldn't be just tiny pups.

“Spirit of the horse, Unicorn.”

After he cast the spell, a horse was conjured.

Silver eyes, white skin, white hairs, and a white horn.

Its body size and muscles were much bigger than normal horses.

“Unicorn...?”

“W, wow...!”

“Is it really exists?”

The people inside the mansion paid attention.

Vanessa, Ledio and Douglas.

In addition, all the maids and guards.

It was a natural reaction.

It was a ‘unicorn’ that Ian just had conjured.

‘A unicorn is the perfect creature for carrying burden.’

Whether people were surprised or not, Ian didn’t care about it.

A unicorn was no more than his good companion for carrying burdens.

Sometimes, for riding.

“See you later everyone.”

Ian put all of his burdens on the unicorn.

He said farewell to everyone. It might not take him more than a few months, but Ian felt a little bit awkward since he hadn’t parted from them for 5 years.

“I will be back soon, so you don’t need to worry about me.”

Behind everyone’s good bye,

Ian moved forward.

He couldn’t help himself from looking back.

It was rather Ian, who was worrying for them.

‘I have to trust them.’

He had to trust.

Trust the guards who were protecting the mansion,

Trust the increased safety of city,

Trust the Crown Prince and Oliver who would visit quite often,

Trust those young mages who were following Ian.

And also,

‘I have prepared what I could.’

Ian installed a ‘mana trap’ that covers every side of the mansion, that could only be

activated by Vanessa, Ledio and Douglas. It would solve most threats.

“Let’s go.”

Hostile eastern province, Pieric.

Ian started his journey to the province.

He breathed the air of the outside of the royal palace, that he hadn’t tasted for 5 years.

CHAPTER 46

PIERIC PROVINCE (1)

The ruler of the east of the empire, the Pieric Province, was connected to the Eastern Great Grass Field. The actual situation was way worse than the report said. Literally, they were almost at 'war'. They were at war with monsters from the Great Grass Field.

"Who would expect we need a supply squad against monsters?"

"I'd like to call it a war, rather than a conquest."

"It is definitely a war. Did you see, they were doing a guerilla assault?"

"As I heard, the imperial armies got ambushed."

"Is the world close to the end? Who would have imagined monsters would do such intelligent moves?"

They were talking at the front lines which were located between the Great Grass Field and the Pieric Province.

Many 'front lines' were occurring. And these men were carrying their supplies to the front lines. As they said, it wasn't at the scale of conquering monsters. It was at the scale of war. What kind of conquest would require supplies?

"Why are these monster bastards coming?"

"Who the fuck knows! They used to fight themselves, or fight with those barbarians! Why are these damn monsters doing this?"

The soldiers' voices were getting anxious.

They were against a monster union. Various kinds of monsters formed squads and invaded the province. Hence, every village close to the front lines were completely destroyed. Although massive armies were conducted and successfully pushed back those monsters, they couldn't end the war. So they chose a few valleys and built front fortresses, and battles kept on occurring.

"By the way, when will the Archmage arrive?"

"Yeah. We have requested for him ages ago."

"Isn't he supposed to arrive here now?"

The soldiers' questions were heading to a single person. A conducted mage who looked weak and depressed. The 1st class mage, 'Mcgedie' who just graduated the academy 1 year ago.

"I, I do not know."

How would Mcgedie know?

Although they were both members of the Ivory Tower, He hadn't seen any Archmages before.

Actually, he had seen one of them for a short moment. The Archmage said that he came to meet mages who would be his friend if he had studied magic in the academy as other normal students did.

"Are Archmages really different to normal mages? Those 3rd class mages who were fighting at the front line, they seem very powerful, but just an addition of one of them won't change the tide, I assume. As you know, there are so fucking many of them."

There were huge rank gaps between a normal soldier and a mage.

Even 1st class mages were much higher than them.

However these soldiers didn't care about their language.

It was due to that the conducted mage was scared and pressured by hostile soldiers.

"That make some damn sense. Archmages are usually 4th class, aren't day? I don't think 4th class would be that much different to the 3rd class. I rather want them to send more imperial soldiers."

Soldiers started to agree with those silly assumptions.

Finally, Mcgedie opened his mouth with small voice.

"T, there is big difference between them."

"You sure? Is there really any difference?"

"If an Archmage came, H, he will be a very powerful ally, indeed."

"Humph! I don't believe it."

There was a reason why these soldiers were acting rude to Mcgedie. When he joined the battle the first time, this 18 year old Mcgedie freaked out and didn't do anything but hide under the wall. Furthermore, he pissed his pants. A few soldiers saw it, and Mcgedie started being laughed at. They couldn't ignore him directly, since he had higher rank than them. However, the rumors spread fast. And that was why he was

ordered to serve the supplies squad, instead of the front line.

“But still, we feel very confident though. The supplies squad who was guarded by the mage! Who would expect such a ‘luxurious’ squad?”

Even high rank nobles unofficially allowed them to tease this mage.
Also, Mcgedie couldn’t say much about this sarcasm.

“How ‘lucky’ we are that.....”

It was the last voice of the soldier who kept joking about Mcgedie.

“E, Erk...!”

An arrow penetrated his neck.

“Arrow...?”

The soldiers couldn’t realize situation clearly.
Who the hell, from where, shot that arrow?
It was a huge arrow that normal human wouldn’t able to use.

“Erk!”

Another soldier who laughed the most followed his comrade’s destiny. His side head was penetrated by another huge arrow.

“W, What’s happening?”

“L, Look... Look at there...!”

From every side, enemies revealed their bodies. It was the trolls. A troll squad who outnumbered the soldiers by double had suddenly appeared and surrounded the supplies squad.

“T, troll?”

“How the heck are trolls...?”

Trolls had emerald colored skin and mysterious patterns scripted on it.
Trolls were much more dangerous than goblins.

Bigger bodies than a human's, and more muscle power.
A sharp chin and nose. A raised back head.
A pair of sharp teeth.

"This doesn't make any sense..."
"D, did these trolls wait to hunt the supplies?"

They all knew that monsters that assaulted the province this year were quite intelligent. However, they were still not smart as humans. They ran away and assaulted when they had to, they drew enemies to the site where they were ambushing. It was no more than that. However these trolls, who were supposed to be at the front line, were awaiting the supplies at the very centre of the province. How did they dare plan to cut down their enemies' supply line?

"M, make a formation! Shield up!"

As the veteran soldiers shout, other soldiers started to pull out shields from the supplies cache. The problem was the number of soldiers weren't enough to form a defense formation.

"Krrr! Krrrr!"

The trolls growled with their unique sound.

They started to pressure the supplies squad with their numbers. Furthermore, the troll's combat skills were overwhelming the soldiers of supplies squad. Humans were outnumbered and outskilled. They had no hope.

"S, sir Mcgedie! Do something!"

The panicked soldiers shouted to the mage.

At last, it was the mage, who may be able to turn the tides in this situation.

"I, I..."
"We are all gonna die!"
"You are a mage! Sir Mcgedie!"

He didn't even master the 1st class.
What could he do in this situation?
He was against trolls in many numbers.

'I, I have to slow down their approach, at least.'

Mcgedie wanted to live as well.

He made his own decision, and he acted quickly.

Thanks to God, he could see a lot of grass and trees around.

It was good to use for a fire.

"W, what the hell are you doing?"

"I'm trying to stop their approach!"

"Why don't you just hit them directly?"

"B, but wouldn't it make them furious?"

In this emergency, the soldiers and the mage started to argue. The supplies squad was losing their focus quickly.

'H, how, what should I do...?'

Mage Mcgedie tried to find a solution.

However, he couldn't think of a good one.

Only his survival instinct was pressuring him.

'I, I don't want die yet.'

Not only Mcgedie, but everyone here was thinking the same.

They didn't want to die. They couldn't die now.

Especially not by trolls.

They were famous for eating 'humans'.

They not only just ate humans, but use their skins and bones for making their tools.

'Dying by such creatures?'

It was the most unworthy death as a human.

However, there was no way to escape.

"N, no. No!"

While unknown soldiers' desperate cries were representing everyone's despair, Mcgedie, soldiers and even the troll squad realized something strange.

Mysterious white powder started to fall from the sky.
It was crystal clear, and cold.
It melted soon after touching the palm.

“Snow?”

Soldiers didn’t know what was snow.
Snow never came to the eastern lands.
However, Mcgedie knew what it was.
He came from the northern side.

“How?”

Hence, he was caught in confusion.
He was standing at the Pieric Province, the eastern land of the empire.
But then snow was falling at the Pieric Province, instead of rain?
Every other place was plausible, but from the eastern land’s sky?

“W, wh...?”

Mcgedie looked up the sky instinctively.
As well as the soldiers of the supplies squad who were born and raised in the eastern lands.
They all lost their word.

*Wooosh... *

A blizzard.
A blizzard was coming.
A more surprising thing was that there was a man.
From the middle of blizzard, A man came out.
It was a man who wore a blue robe.

“Blizzard.”

With his silent mumbling, a randomly blowing wind started to blow in a specific direction. Like a squad of fish that was hunting their prey.

“Krr! KrrrrK!”

“Krrrrraaaa!”

A tough blizzard swept around the ground. Not Mcgedie and soldiers though, but it was only targeting the trolls. At that point Mcgedie and soldiers lost their mind. It was a natural reaction.

*Woooshhh – !”

The troll squad quickly decided to retreat.

However, in front of the mighty blizzard, their struggling legs were meaningless. There were only corpses of frozen trolls left behind the blizzard.

“W, what is going o...”

It happened so suddenly.

The trolls were eliminated, and they were the only ones who survived.

However, they felt like they were dreaming.

“M, magic?”

After a moment of silence, the soldiers started to think.

Okay. This must be magic. Otherwise, this tremendous power couldn't be explained. Then the question is who did this? A mage, Mcgedie?

‘It can't be.’

That didn't make sense to them. Even 3rd class mages couldn't cast such powerful magic. The magic they just saw was unfathomable. It was a natural disaster. Then there was only one left. A man who was floating in the air. That blue robe man must be a mage then.

‘A mage stronger than a 3rd class mage?’

When everyone had reached to the same conclusion, a mysterious mage came down to the ground,

“W, who are you?”

The soldiers asked him nervously.

After their question, the mage took off his hood.

“Drop down your weapon. I’m your ally.”

The mage’s appearance and voice represented that he was a young man. Thanks to that, Mcgedie could guess his identity. A powerful young mage whose age was similar to him, who else could it be?

“I, Ian... Page?”

The soldiers also knew Ian’s name.

They heard a lot of rumors about him.

A genius who only could only appear in novels.

The youngest arch mage in history.

“Are you... sir Ian?”

Mcgedie carefully questioned.

“You know me.”

Ian replied lightly.

“I, I am honored to meet you!”

Ian nodded shortly. He pulled out a medal from his coat. It was the ‘Medal of the Archmage’, which allowed its holder to have authority to control a province soldier and their citizens.

“I am Ian Page, Archmage of the Ivory Tower who was ordered to help you. I heard that the Pieric land lord is at the front line now, can you bring me to him?”

Ian asked them politely.

Since he showed his medal, it was a order.

They had no reason to refuse as traveling with him would be the most safe travel.

“W, we will guide you!”

While other soldiers were still caught in a panic, a veteran soldier came out and spoke. He exactly knew the power of the medal. Although it was the first time he saw it for real, but he heard of its power clearly.

“A, and thank you for helping us all!”

And he already knew the power of a Archmage very well.

Archmages were totally different to a 1st class mage. Archmages were much higher than their boss. Any single mistake would risk their life.

“We will never forget the grace we have received today!”

The veteran soldier bowed down and said gratefully to Ian. Other soldiers followed his action by watching him. Although the Archmage acted politely, his social rank was much higher than them.

“T, thank you! Thank you! Mr. Mage!”

“Really thank you for saving us!”

“Thanks to you, I can see my family again!”

They complimented him for a while.

Soldiers used every expression they knew.

‘W, wow.’

Mcgedie looked at Ian with admiration.

He never got such treatment.

‘That is... a real mage.’

He had never seen the real power of an Archmage before.

And he realized how weak he was.

It was more than amazing, but he felt dizzy.

“Mr. Mage.”

“...”

“Mr. Mage?”

“Ah! Yes!”

Mcgedie awoke from his deep thoughts because of Ian's callings.

"You are the conducted mage, right?"

"Yes I am! I am honored to meet..."

"You said that a few minutes ago."

"Ah..."

With a smile, Ian continued his words.

"What is your name?"

"I am Mcgedie! It has been 1 year since I have been conducted..."

"You are senior to me then."

"S, senior? No way..."

"Let's go. You can't stay there forever"

The soldiers had already finished preparing to move.

Some of them had already walked far away while Mcgedie was in his deep thoughts.

"I, I am really sorry!"

Mcgedie joined the squad in a hurry.

CHAPTER 47

PIERIC PROVINCE (2)

“Is it?”

“Yes, there is no other path connecting to the empire except the valley of the big snake. Otherwise, they have to climb over mountains, but it is not easy to move troops across the mountain.”

Mcgedie had already become a loyal ‘guide’ of the province. Ian knew most of these facts, but there was a few pieces of information that he didn’t know, so he pretended he hadn’t been to the province.

“So the trolls we saw yesterday must have across the mountains.”

It was nearly impossible to guard every side of the mountains from monsters. Furthermore, who would expect them to assault a supplies troop? It was weird, indeed.

‘The hobgoblin I saw before was supposed to be only seen at the great grass field.’

Ian recalled the event at the Mogrian Province. Did that hobgoblin cross these mountains like the trolls?

‘Maybe not.’

Ian had thought about for a moment, but soon he shook his head. There was a possibility, but it was too low. It was quite far from here to the northern territory. Any monsters who tried to cross the territory must have been slain before reaching to Mogrian Province.

“Also the Pieric land lord is fighting at the valley. He always fights at the front line as the vanguard, which always scares us.”

Mcgedie kept up with his explanations.
The young land lord, ‘Kalian Pieric.’

The man who was called, 'The best warrior of the eastern territory'
Ian also had a talk with him in his former life.

'It was rather a big problem that the best warrior was the land lord.'

He always risked his life at the front lines. Although he had no reclaimer, he always fought recklessly. He was a true warrior indeed, but not a good leader while considering about the province's future.

"Anyway, without your help, I must be in huge trouble."

Indeed, he must be in huge trouble.

Mcgedie had been conducted for only one year. However, in his former life, Ian was conducted to this area. It was around the end of this year in his former life. What did this mean? If Megedie had survived that ambush, Ian wouldn't be conducted to this province.

'He must be dead, by the trolls.'

In his former life, Mcgedie had been killed, and there had been a vacancy in the conducted mages, so Ian had been conducted to the Pieric Province.

"I thank you again. I almost gave up my life. I heard that trolls eat human flesh, it's so scary..."

Mcgedie shook his body.

Ian saw him for a moment.

He had a soft and white face, and a small body.

Also, he wore a robe that was too big for him.

'She costumed herself as male'

Ian already knew her secret from long ago. He had already checked the brief information of the mission. There was information about the conducted mage as well.

'She must be having a hard time.'

A mage got huge authority. Also, they were quite powerful. Hostile soldiers? If she wanted, she could turn them into burnt barbecue in few seconds.

However,

‘She doesn’t have any social experience.’

Most mages were called to the academy at 12 years old, and they lived in the socially isolated academy for 5 years. Hence, most of those fresh mages had no social experience. And this 5 year conducting system was designed to cover up their lost 5 years of their social life.

‘She must be in a lot of deep pressure due to the circumstances of this hostile province.’

It was the province where war occurred most commonly among the empire.
She must be scared by its dangerous atmosphere.
She was scared even further due to her shy characteristics.
In addition, she had been conducted for only 1 year.

‘She must have changed her appearance and voice by spell.’

Maybe that’s why.
The reason she chose to costume as male.
It was her ‘best solution’ by her experience.

‘I don’t think it was good choice.’

To Ian, it was her mistake. Although some soldiers might under look her, she had solid ‘authority’, and ‘magic’. They couldn’t cross her line.

‘Rather than a man,’

Rather than a weak and coward man, it would be better choice for her to be a female.
At least she would be treated well in the name of the ‘manners for a lady’.

“There, that’s the valley of the big snake.”

Mcgedie said while pointing to the front.
From a far distance, there was the biggest front line in the eastern territory.
Ian could reach the point quickly if he had no companions to protect.

“Wait a second, please.”

Ian stopped the march and then floated to the sky. Then, he gathered his mana and released it to every side.

‘Detect.’

A magic that detects any living signal nearby.
A transparent wave spread to the far distance.
It was a detect spell that was casted by Ian.
Its range was much bigger than other mages.

‘Nope.’

There was no movement from other monsters.
After finish detecting, Ian came down to the ground.

“I will see you guys there. There is no monsters nearby, so don’t worry.”

Soldiers were embarrassed when they heard Ian leaving them behind, and relieved when they heard that there were no monsters nearby.
It was only Mcgedie who looked sad still.

‘It was a good moment...’

Mcgedie felt sadness.
With Ian around, the soldiers showed respect to her as well.
She hadn’t received such respect since she had been conducted to the province.
Her dreamlike moment had ended shortly.

“See you there.”

Ian flied to the valley of the big snake.
His mission was to ‘finish the issue of the eastern province.’
By any means necessary, he was ordered to solve this problem.
Whether slaying every single monster or finding out source of the issue and destroying it.
The valley was the debut stage of Ian Page’s mission.



“Bring me ten of those disgusting heads!”

The scale of the valley was huge.

It was the only path that connected the empire and the Great Grass Field.

The valley of the big snake was a chaotic war field.

“Don’t even think about dying before that!”

Together with the leading of the great land lord ‘Kalian Pieric,’ his soldiers, imperial soldiers and the 3rd class mages were guarding the valley desperately. Endless tides of monsters were coming.

“Do you copy?”

“Yes, my lord!”

The young great land lord, Kalian.

He shouted bravely while yielding his duel axes. His vanguards also rushed towards the monsters bravely. However, the situation was turning ugly for them.

‘They are being overwhelmed by their numbers.’

Ian was watching them from above.

He could see the power imbalance clearly.

Look at those tides of monsters.

Even wild, mages were resting at the back row.

‘They seem to be mana breathing.’

It seemed like their mana was depleted.

It showed how long and desperate the war has been.

‘I better block their path first.’

If the war remained like so, they would be doomed.

The monsters knew that, so they kept pushing.

‘But first, I better drink a half elixir.’

Ian took off the cap of Douglas' special half elixir.
A bitter smell stinked up his nose.

Gulp!

The effect of the half elixir spread through his whole body.
Indeed, Douglas' confidence was reasonable.
From its power to warming up time, it was superior to his father's half elixir.

'He is indeed a worthy rival who killed me in my former life.'

Although it sounded wrong, it was a compliment.
He was the creator of the poison that killed this mighty 8th class mage.
In his former life, of course.

"Hmm."

After a smile, Ian looked down the giant valley. Ian knew the solution that would stop the war at the valley. Although he couldn't eliminate those monsters, he was able to stop the monster's invasion for a moment.

"Let's start."

Ian landed at the boundary of the front line, a little bit closer to the monster side, to avoid friendly fire.

Step!

With his appearance, Ian received attention briefly.
Due to the chaotic situation, none of the humans and monsters could pay attention on him deeply.
But that moment was enough to let them have one question.

'Who is that?'

Soon, they would see the answer.
Massive mana that was coming from Ian was injected to the surface of ground.

“Ice wall.”

Ian started to build an ‘Ice wall.’
It wasn’t just a normal ice wall.

Grrrrrrrrrrr – !

The width of the valley was huge, as well as its height.
It was the valley at the very middle of the mountain.
However, the massive ice wall was big enough to cover the path. It was literally, a ‘massive wall’.

“W, what the...”

Ian’s noisy appearance shocked everyone again. However, Ian couldn’t stop yet. There were still many monsters that were left on the inside of the ice wall. Ian had to eliminate them.

“The Archmage of the Ivory Tower has finally arrived!”

The great land lord understood the situation quickly, and shouted.
There were no better words that could encourage the soldiers at that moment.
Everyone wished to receive the Archmage’s help, and they just saw his mighty ice wall.

“The Archmage is with us! Don’t let them survive! None of them!”

Isolated monsters started being slain quickly, by the encouraged soldiers’ blades and spears, and by the axes of the great land lord, Kalian.

The war that seemed endless had paused for a moment.
Monsters couldn’t climb over Ian’s ice wall, and they couldn’t cross the mountains altogether.

“I had never expected them to push our lines with numbers.”

At the wide barrack of the great land lord Kalian, Ian and Kalian were having a conversation.
The land lord had a huge body.

“Actually, we expected them to push with their numbers, but not by that much. Today they seemed very determined. There must be something going on at the Great Grass Field. Otherwise...”

Kalian was right. Ian also felt something weird while he was casting the ice wall. He held eye contact with a few of the monsters. A emotion going through their eyes, and it wasn't just the usual hatred.

‘Fear’

They seemed to be in fear and were being chased by something. They looked like a soldiers who were near death.

‘There is something wrong.’

The reason they rushed them, while being scared. There must be some kind of source for it.

“As you know, we requested two things to the royalty and the Ivory Tower. First thing was the support with supplies and soldiers, and the second was conducting an Archmage. An Archmage who can solve this problem alone.”

Kalian continued while watching the ice wall.

“Indeed, the ice wall is impressive. We earned some time thanks to the wall. However it's only a temporary solution isn't it? Since they chose to send you instead of the armies, I want you to discuss about the fundamental solution with me.”

It was a reasonable request from Kalian. If the armies kept being supplied, he would continue this war, but the empire refused to do so. Instead, they sent an Archmage. It meant they wanted Kalian to seek an alternative solution, instead of just total war.

“I understand.”

Ian replied.

“The wall will be remaining there for approximately 10 days.

The ice wall would be vaporize slowly with its mana being depleted.

They would be safe for around 10 days, unless monsters crossed the mountains. Kalian's face turned a little bit bright.

"While the ice wall is activated, I will visit the Great Grass Field."

"Are you going there by yourself?"

"I will try to find out the source of it. If possible, I will find out the solution, too."

It was the duty of the Archmages.

When a disaster came that couldn't be solved by normal man power.

An Archmage was a solo operator who could solve such disasters alone.

'And there is a few things I need to obtain from the Great Grass Field.'

Ian didn't choose this area just because of his duty. There were many reasons Ian chose to visit this area. A familiar area he lived before, a weird situation that Ian didn't know in former life. In addition there was another special reason.

'Especially, I want that staff.'

Somewhere in the Great Grass Field, there was a 'staff' that Ian wanted so much.

"The aborigines must be holding it."

They must be related to this monster event in some way. If he use this chance well, followed by the 'Mogrian ring', 'Amulet of queen', and 'Michell Greenriver's robe', he might be able to obtain his 'fourth artifact.'

CHAPTER 48

THE GREAT GRASS FIELD (1)

“It’s worse than I thought.”

Ian murmured after he searched through some monster nests in the northern territory, which was half of the grass field. It was a severe situation.

‘Are these monsters of the grass field united?’

The grass field was known to have 70 percent of its territory being conquered by monsters, and rest by aborigines. During the past hundreds of years, the aborigines had successfully united and formed one whole tribe. On the other hand, every different species of monsters used to kill each other, until only a few months ago. But from a few months ago, they suddenly became united. Furthermore,

‘They are not only attacking the Pieric Province.’

Monsters weren’t only attacking the Pieric Province, which represented the Greenriver Empire’s territory. From the point of view of the Great Grass Field, they attacked the Coldwood Empire located at their north side, as well as the principality of Lo located at their north-west side.

‘Why?’

Ian couldn’t search through everything detail. But what he knew was that monsters were invading all of these three countries’ border lines. And it was the Pieric Province which was under the most attack from monsters. The reason must be due to the valley of the big snake.

‘The paths to the other countries are narrow and spread out.’

For the other countries, monsters had to invade the country with a small sized squad due to its narrow path, but the Greenriver Empire was connected by a huge valley, which allowed massive numbers of monsters to invade the border line at once. It was

natural that the Greenriver Empire received relatively more damage by the monsters.

“Then what about the aborigines?”

Monsters were literally, attacking every side of the grass field. Then what about the aboriginal villages which were the closest to the monsters nests? Were they being invaded by monsters as well?

‘I better check.’

The south of the Great Grass Field was the territory of aborigines.

Their union was formed by hundreds of small and big villages.

After Ian reached the border of their territory, Ian dispelled his fly magic. So much mysterious things were happening, and Ian didn’t know what he would confront, so he chose to save his mana as much as he could.

‘It’s quiet.’

It was totally different to the northern side where it was full of noises due to the monsters.

The southern territory of the aborigines was peaceful. There were no monsters, and Ian looked rather like an invader.

‘Suspicious.’

And that made it more suspicious.

A quiet atmosphere as if Ian was no longer standing at the grass field.

In this situation, how this could have happened?

‘It’s supposed to be the aborigines who should be in conflict with the monsters.’

When everything became more suspicious, a small sized aboriginal patrol surrounded Ian with their spears and axes.

“Identify yourself!”

Black skinned aborigines surrounded Ian. Every one of them had a big body as much as Kalian, the great land lord. Their appearance was quite threatening due to their accessories made by monster skins and bones.

“I am not your enemy.”

Ian started to speak a language that was unknown to most people. Ian had learned many languages while he was researching the dragon chants, as well as the aborigine language of the Great Grass Field.

“I came from the Greenriver Empire.”

The aborigines looked a little bit amazed.
Their language was spoken by a foreigner.
They had never experienced such a situation.

“How do you know our language?”

The biggest man of the patrol asked. His black and flexible muscles looked like obsidian, rather than human flesh.

“I don’t have much time. I came here to meet the King of Shamans.”

“What?”

The King of Shamans.
They were like the aboriginal ‘Tower Lord.’
There were also aborigines who were born with a mana heart and a mana brain, and they were raised to become shamans, instead of mages. Since a shaman also yielded the power of mana like a mage, they both had common things, but also different things as well.

“I want to discuss about the northern monster invasions with him. I am sure he would know about this situation...”

“You dare!”

Ian explained his request gently in their language.
However, their response was cold
Rather, they seemed hostile.

“You arrogant dog of the empire dare to mention his name. Do you think he is your friend that can be called whenever you want?”

The aborigines started to smash the ground with the end of their spears. To Ian, the King of Shamans looked like a Tower Lord, but to the aborigines, he was more than that. Literally, he was a 'king' to them.

"Get off you arrogant bastard! If you speak nonsense one more time, we will sacrifice your body to the spirit of the Great Grass Field!"

A rough and clear order was given.

However, Ian wouldn't follow their orders. Rather, it made him angry. Ian wasn't a bad tempered man. He wasn't the type of mage who invaded their homeland and started to burn down their homes before speaking. Not in his former life, as well as this life, unless there was a special case. However, the situation was different this time.

"Then, for you guys,"

Ian treated them politely enough.

There was no need for a second time of politeness.

His opponent didn't deserve it.

"Do I look like a man who would follow your order?"

Ian leered at them sharply.

The aborigines also grabbed their spear firmly.

"Let's see if you can say that after your death!"

The aborigines started their assault.

However Ian didn't deal with them with his magic.

More precisely, it wasn't 'only' magic that he used.

'Ice Spear'

A long icicle was formed in his hand.

It was a thin and sharp icicle like a sword.

Only the end of its body was dull, so that it was easy to hold.

Ian made it like this on purpose.

'For mana,'

Ian took a legitimate sword fighting stance.

It was obviously the 'Imperial Sword Art.'
It was only an icicle that had replaced the sword.
Actually, an 'Ice sword' replaced the sword.

'I will try to save it as much as I can.'

For the last 5 years, Ian didn't just duel with Oliver. Ian did some physical exercises that may help his mana heart grow. Naturally, Ian had a chance to learn the knight's practice and Imperial Sword Art. It was quite interesting.

'I wasn't talented as a physical fighter, though.'

Ian wasn't that talented as a swordsman.

However, Ian was mage. If he enhanced his body with mana and a supportive spell,

'I will be strong as a young royal knight.'

Supportive magic such as enhancing agility and reaction speed, with the help of those, Ian's sword skill wasn't that bad. It was quite good actually. That was the evaluation by Oliver and the other knights. There was no boot licking, but an honest evaluation.

Clinnnng-!

The spear of the giant aborigine's was deflected to the sky.
He couldn't deal Ian with his big muscles.

'H, how he can be...!'

Ian was powerful as the shaman bodyguards.
They also yielded massive power with their small body.
Was this imperial man the same kind as them?

'Magic Missile.'

The aborigine stepped back while staggering.
Ian didn't miss this chance.

Bang!

A small mana sphere smashed the aborigine's abdomen. A small explosion had occurred, as well. Although it wouldn't kill him, he would be suffering for a while. His intestines were twisted by its impact.

"Errghh!"

This Imperial man's muscle power was similar to their tribe guards.

However, that magic was similar to their shaman.

Embarrassed, the aborigines had stepped back.

"M, mage. An imperial mage!"

They also knew about the imperial mages.

They were a similar kind to that of the shamans. After they recognized Ian was mage, they pulled out their horn, and tried to blow it. They were trying to call for reinforcements.

"Don't make it a mess."

However, their effort was meaningless. A tangle arose from the ground and snapped the horn. It was the great grass field. It was the perfect area to cast ground type magic without using too much mana.

"Monsters are invading our border lines."

Ian approached the tangled aborigines.

He aimed at their necks with his ice sword.

"However, it seems you guys are unaffected by them. You guys must be related to it."

Even a soft touch of the ice sword made them bleed.

The edge was very sharp.

"Tell me. The King of Shamans. Where can I find him?"

"O, our king..."

"Are you looking for me, young man?"

From behind, an old man's voice was heard.

Although he was standing far away, his voice was clear.

A shaman was similar to the mage.
They knew how to enhance their voice with their mana.

“Why is an imperial man looking for the King of Shamans?”

An old man wearing a wolf skin approached, followed by many guards as well.

“Are you the King of Shamans?”
“People call me like that.”
“I came from the Greenriver Empire. I came here to ask you about those monsters.”

Ian drew away his ice sword.
Ian said to the old man while briefly looking at the birch staff on his hand.

“Do you know anything about them?”
“What are those monsters are doing?”
“They are invading three countries’ border line.”
“That’s standard.”

The old man replied without any curiosity.
It was indeed the standard thing to happen.
But its scale was absurd.

“That’s strange. It must be you guys who are the most sensitive about the monsters’ movement, but you guys are reacting like you have never heard about it. Most of all, you are the King of Shaman.”

Ian’s suspicion was getting deeper, and clearer.

“And.”

There was a critical fact that proved he was lying.

“You are not the King of Shamans.”
“...?”

The old man swayed for a moment.
Although it was for a glimpse of a moment, Ian’s eyes didn’t miss it.

“What nonsense...”

“That staff.”

Ian was looking at the old man’s staff.

He was watching it from beginning.

That was the critical clue.

“As far as I know, the King of Shamans uses a different staff.”

Ian didn’t know well about the aborigine’s daily routine.

However, at least Ian knew about their staffs.

The staff that was given to the King of Shaman.

It was the ‘fourth artifact’ that Ian was targeting.

“What are you guys manipulating?”

Ian asked quietly.

By his question, the old man raised his staff highly.

“Dear fire element!”

Soon, giant flames started to burn its surrounding.

It was a different type of magic compared to imperial mage’s magic. The flame had a head and arms. It was a copied version of the fire spirit magic, precisely, ‘incantation’.

“It is not your business, imperial man.”

The aboriginal shaman’s voice changed and became cold.

His summoned flames started to attack Ian.

“Hah...”

It must be their ultimate move for them.

However, Ian laughed bitterly.

It seemed he was underestimated by that fake King of Shaman.

‘This is quite awkward.’

They must have underestimated him due to Ian pretending to be a sword man. Maybe

that shaman estimated Ian to be an imperial mage who could use the sword and a first class mage who could cast the lowest class magic, such as the magic missile.

‘Fire element, is it?’

He was attacking Ian with the copied version of fire spirit magic.
So Ian decided to show the higher tier of magic than those incantations.
Ian was the best mage of the Empire, wasn’t he?
It was unofficial though.

‘An eye for an eye and tooth for tooth.’

After dodging the attack of the shaman’s fire spell, Ian drew a conjuring formulae. It was much more complicated than conjuring the wolf spirits or conjuring a unicorn. However, Ian drew it perfectly, and without any mistake.

“Conjure.”

Ian spoke the casting spell in their language on purpose.
They believed in spirits as their guardian spirit.

“Fire spirit, Salamander.”

Compared to the fake fire spirit of the shaman, it was a giant flame lizard that had a much bigger body and flames around it. It was the moment where the ‘fire spirit salamander’ was summoned at the Great Grass Field.

“F, fire spirit...?”

It was the appearance of a real spirit. Not a fake one made by the shamans, but a real fire spirit, a salamander, was conjured. Furthermore, it consumed the fake spirit that the shaman had conjured.

“If you want to live,”

The salamander walked around the aborigines.
Its fire energy had reached the aborigines very well.
Even a single breathe of air made them feel like they were burning.
Whenever if they tried to do any tricky moves, the spirit would burn them.

“Stop lying to me.”

CHAPTER 49

THE GREAT GRASS FIELD (2)

There were various methods to threaten people.
Such as magic on a tremendous scale that would cause them to piss themselves.
However, Ian chose to 'conjure a spirit'.

"S, spirit..."

The reason was simple.
His opponent conjured a copied version of a spirit.
The first reason was that Ian had felt competitive.
The second was,

"Dear fire spirit!"

He knew the religious characteristics of the aborigines quite well.
To them, spirits were treated as Gods. Even the election process of the King of Shamans was related to spirits. A shaman who could conjure a 'real' spirit was elected as the King of Shamans. From the point of view as a mage, they were only around the 3rd class.

'It must be their first time seeing a salamander level spirit.'

To the aborigines, a shaman was a king, and the messenger of God. That was the reason, that Ian had summoned this giant flame lizard, 'salamander'. It was the most effective spell to the aborigines more than others, spiritually, and visually.

'I didn't expect them to be this astonished, though.'

Ian just tried to threaten them.
However, they were kneeling down and started bowing,
As if they had met a 'real God'.

"Dear fire spi..."

“Stop.”

By Ian’s order, the salamander breathed out. Even its single breath burnt down the grass underneath it.

“Now can we talk?”

The bent down aborigines looked confused. They were isolated from society for a long time. Since they had observed a greater spirit than their King of Shamans, they couldn’t think properly.

“The spirit is asking through me.”

“Yikes!”

It was very effective.

“Where is the King of Shamans, actually, why are you hiding him? You better tell me the truth.”

At last, the old fake King of Shamans came out and bowed down. He must be one of the high rank shamans so he was doing the King of Shaman’s job, which was similar to an Archmage for the aborigines.

“T, the King of Shamans is not in the village.”

It was the expected answer.

Their action had proved his words already.

They were creating some kind of plan.

It must be the plan of the King of Shamans.

“Give me the details.”

“F, for the details, we have no idea...”

“The spirit is furious.”

“S, spirit...?”

By Ian’s gesture, the salamander shook its head curiously.

Ian had to show the salamander by raising his head and pretending that he was breathing fire. Then the salamander understood Ian’s intention and started to breathe fire in the sky. That was the proper expression of ‘fury’.

“I, I will tell you!”

With this scene, the aborigines' bodies started to shake.

It would've been no different to normal imperial men. Imagine giant flame lizard spreading fire on the sky. Furthermore, aborigines believed in spirits.

“The King of Shamans said that h, he is opening a path.”

“Opening path?”

“He told us that he found a new plan to conquer the northern monsters and open the path between other strong countries...”

“Plan?”

“W, we do not know what the plan is. He just told us that he had a plan, and headed to the north, and he substituted me to do his job. That's all I know, I swear.”

The old man desperately claimed that he wasn't lying. However, Ian's interrogating spell was revealing that the old man was saying a lie. The old man must know what the 'plan' was. It must be some plan that wasn't pleasant to the empire's men.

‘A plan to conquer all monsters?’

Ian had almost solved the puzzle. Those monsters acted intelligently, as they were ordered by someone. If assuming that the King of Shamans managed to control some actions of those monsters, it started to make sense.

‘He may be using the border lines to reduce their numbers.’

Sending monsters to the three countries' border lines.

Endlessly, with deception.

Then, the three countries would act sensitively, wouldn't they?

They would focus their forces on conquering all those monsters.

‘Falling into his lap.’

The consumption of supplies and sacrifices was the responsibility of those countries. It was a decent plan, indeed.

In the point of the aborigines' view, of course.

‘And it will actually happen soon.’

Ian knew the brief historical flow after this event. Three countries would soon hold their meeting, and form a united monster conquering army. As the King of Shamans wished, most of the monsters were eliminated from the Great Grass Field. But,

‘The aborigines become their slaves.’

A ‘new path’ wouldn’t be constructed. Rather, those countries divided this resourceful aborigine’s land into several pieces, and enslaved these aborigines.

‘It will happen in future after a while, though.’

Anyway, it wouldn’t change their future.

Ian leered at the old man.

Then, he spoke quietly.

“He found an incantation that controls the monsters, hasn’t he?”

The old man’s body shook greatly.

It seemed Ian got the point right.

“What kind of incantation is it?”

“.....”

The old man’s face turned pale. The opponent was the one who conjured the ‘real spirit’. Furthermore, it seemed that he could see through his mind and find out the truth. If he kept lying, he couldn’t guarantee the future of his life and these tribes.

“.....The King of Shamans had learnt the incantation from a woman, who had white skin like you.”

“Woman?”

“The King of Shamans just called her a guest, and she left after a few days. A few days later, our king scripted such a formula on his staff, and then headed to the north. T, trust me.

That meant this event wasn’t planned by the King of Shamans alone. If the woman had white skin, she must come from an Empire or Principality.

“Hmm.”

Ian had imagined a few guesses and possibilities.
But soon, he decided to solve the problem he faced right now.

‘He is not telling a lie.’

So there was only one way to solve this problem.
Firstly, he had to find out where the King of Shamans, among those tides of monsters were.

‘Next,’

Whether killing him or stopping him, Ian had to release those monsters from his control.

The method was simple.

‘It is rather the problem on how to find where he is and approach him.’

Ian tied up his long hair.
Now the solution was clear.
It was the time for action.

“Thank you for your help.”

Ian treated them politely, again.
There were no businesses left with the aborigines. He didn’t even care enough to punish their rudeness. He got what he needed, and the staff must be with the King of Shamans.

“That man may need some treatment.”

Ian dismissed the salamander, and pointed to the man that Ian had defeated with his sword.

“Excuse me then.”

Ian was raised up to the sky. Conjuring a real spirit already shocked them, but now Ian was flying. The aborigines were astonished again.

“Is something going wrong?”

The great land lord of the Pieric Province held his head. It was already ten days since the Archmage, Ian Page, had gone to the Great Grass Field. But he hadn’t received any messages from him since.

‘If he doesn’t return...’

The ice wall that blocked the path of the valley started to melt down. He told him before that it would hold for ten days, so it would melt soon.

‘I can’t just wait for him, either’

He already had heard enough about Ian Page. He had trusted Ian’s mighty power would solve this problem, but it seemed he was wrong.

“Adol.”

“Yes, My lord.”

The great land lord Kalian called ‘Adol,’ who was waiting outside of the barrack, the best warrior of his, and ordered him to prepare for war.

“As we planned, form a formation. Focus every army and catapult we have in the province. Even bring squads who were guarding the mountain side, as well.”

“As you command.”

Adol’s voice was revering.

He was prepared to die.

He quickly left the barrack.

‘Sir Ian, I do not blame you.’

Kalian was telling the truth. It must’ve been too much for him to solve this problem solely by himself. He rather wanted to blame the royalty and the Ivory Tower, who refused to send supplies and armies, but only sent him alone.

‘Rather, it might’ve been the better choice to ask him to fight together on our side.’

If so, he could kept blocking the path with the wall, so he could resend his request to

the Empire and earn some time to let them come.

‘It is too late for regrets.’

Kalian stood up. Then he picked up a pair of axes that were laid on the barrack. It was the family heirloom battle axes, ‘Pieric’s Executioner’.

“We will defend it, me and my soldiers.”

Kalian self encouraged himself.

Protecting the province and the people in there, as the strongest shield of the Empire. With hundreds times of reminding himself, he left the barrack and confronted his battle field. He looked at the ice wall’s height, which was quite lower, calmly.

“Humph, come at me, foul creatures.”

At the ice blocked Valley of the Big Snake, every force was focused. The imperial armies which he received as the first reinforcement, two 3rd class mages and the conducted mage McGedie, and catapults for the first strike.

“My lord.”

“Uhm.”

After a few hours later, they finished their preparation.

The ice wall which had melted down to half of its original size.

“Prepare the catapults.”

A quiet order of the great land lord on the watch tower was relayed to every catapult squad. It was quiet, and everyone was nervous. There was no speech, nor encouragement. It was the silence before the storm.

“Eee...”

The conducted mage, McGedie shook her body.

She rather preferred to being teased by the supplies squad now.

Not only her, but most of the other soldiers, as well. They recalled their best moment of their life or a better moment than now. They all wished to rewind their time.

“Hold.”

But soon, by the great land lord’s dry order, they awakened.
It was about to start.

“Not yet.”

The defrosting rate of the ice wall was increasing.
It would melt down in a few minutes, low enough to invade.

“Little bit more.”

The land lord’s right arm was raised with his battle axe. The blade of the axe was reflecting sunshine everywhere. Whenever he put down his right arm, the catapults would start its attack.

“Little bit more.”

When the opposite side of ice wall was about to be revealed, everyone lost their focus quickly. The wall suddenly started to crack down.

“What?”

“Is it cracking down?”

“Why?”

20 thousands of soldiers started whispering.
It wasn’t an ideal atmosphere before the war.
The land lord had to calm down and let them focus.

“Fi...!”

Just before the firing order had given,

Cr... Crackkk...!

The crack of the ice wall getting bigger, quicker than they thought,

Grrrrrrrrrrrrr – !

Soon it started to fall down.

Thanks to that, every soldier could see its opposite side clearly.

“...?”

There was nothing.

Nothing at the front of the ice wall, nor over the horizon of the valley.

There was not even a single monster standing there.

Instead, there was a man alone.

“Is he...?”

It was Mcgedie who recognized him first.

Soon, other people recognized him as well.

“Pa, pant! Phew...”

It was a young man who wore a robe, covered by dust.

The man breathed roughly, as his lungs were fractured.

“S, sir Ian?”

It was the tenth day since he had been gone.

Today, he didn't come with his flying spell, but with his bare feet.

“This staff...”

Ian was holding a staff with injured hands.

It was a staff with quite the rare appearance.

“Never... Never touch i...”

After barely warning them, Ian fainted.

CHAPTER 50

BREAK THE LIMIT (1)

‘Never touch this staff.’

That was the last warning given by Ian before he fainted.

“Urgh...”

Ian woke up four days later.

With a little bit of moaning, he opened his eyes quickly.

An intolerable pain shook his head.

“This place...?”

After waking up, Ian quickly looked at his surroundings.

There was no luxurious decorations, but it was quite neat and clean.

‘It seems I’m in the province castle.’

Ian acknowledged the area with haste. There would be no other place clean like this in the Pieric Province at the moment.

‘It seems like I made it.’

When Ian arrived at the valley, He used up every single mana and health he had. He had literally ‘fainted’. Did he faint because the King of Shamans had resisted roughly? No. He was an easy opponent. The problem was the staff. ‘The staff of the Great Grass Field’, which was scripted with formulas.

‘I never expected it to cause hallucinations.’

The formula on the staff wasn’t an incantation that controlled the monsters’ minds. It was a ‘hallucination’ that caused a specific ‘vision’, which Ian also suffered from.

‘It was the vision that the Great Grass Field was burnt by a great flame like hell.’

Precisely, it was the hallucination that a meteor devastated the Great Grass Field. The king of shaman kept his incantation, and those monsters attacked the border lines to run away from such disasters.

‘Monsters are easily manipulated by hallucinations.’

Their survival instinct was great. It united every monster as one which hadn’t occurred in history, but also formed order to plan plans to invade us.

‘I better deal with the staff first...’

The formula on the staff wasn’t removed clearly, yet. He just had paused its power for a moment; he barely managed himself to run away from the monsters which had lost their vision.

“Sir Ian?”

Someone entered Ian’s room.

It was the conducted mage, Mcgedie.

“You’re awake!”

He, I mean, she ran into Ian.

She was holding a water bucket and towel.

“How long I have fainted for?”

“For four days straight.”

“Four days...”

After hearing the answer, Ian looked up and down at Mcgedie. He had no idea why the conducted mage was nursing him, but he had another thing to take care of.

“Where is the staff?”

“Ah, the other mages concealed it for you. They said it is in a container which is similar to a mana prison. That...”

At the centre of the room, there was a container.

Mcgedie pointed.

“Nice treatment.”

It was outstanding treatment.

It must've been done by the 3rd class mages.

As satisfied, Ian stood up.

“Y, you still need to take more.....!”

“I am okay.”

Then he approached to the container and opened its cover.

*Screeee... *

After opening the long container, a birch staff was there. As it got lightened, its surface was black, and the all of its body was filled with a tiny formula on its surface.

‘I better deal with the hallucinations first.’

It was impossible to remove a formula once it was scripted. However, Ian could try to change it to another. It could be done by overwriting the script with another formula, or swapping it to a whole new formula.

‘It’s not an easy job.’

It wasn’t an easy job at all. Not only did he need to deal with the original formula, but he also needed to choose the proper formula that synchronized with the artifact. If Ian chose a bad formula, then the artifact would lose its power and became a waste. A waste that had nothing special about it.

“That’s sad, isn’t it?”

Ian liked the staff in various points. Especially, it had a branch on its head which let Ian put a communication orb onto it. That was the important part of it.

‘It is the only staff that may be able to fit the communication orb.’

Ian possessed various artifact staffs in his former life.

And this was why he chose to find this artifact among those staff he once had.

‘Let’s start.’

When Ian raised his left index finger, and soon a tiny ice shard was formed. It was the perfect size for as an ice pick for scripting formulas.

*Scratch scratch... *

Sounds of scripting a formula on the birch staff filled the quiet room.

It seemed it would take a while.

Scratch, again and again...

‘I better leave quietly like the dead.’

Ian was focusing on his job deeply. Thanks to that, Mcgedie missed the suitable time to leave the room, so she just watched Ian without interrupting. She even had to breathe quietly so as to not interrupt Ian.

‘What is he doing anyway?’

His action stimulated Mcgedie’s curiosity.

She had graduated only 1 year ago.

She couldn’t dare to expect what Ian was doing.

‘Hmm.’

She enhanced her eyes with mana.

Then, she started to investigate the staff, from its appearance, to the details of the formula on it.

‘Nope. No idea.’

That was her evaluation.

Knowledge extends one’s understanding.

She just saw Ian’s face.

His focused face was quite impressive.

“...”

When she saw him during the academy course, he was a young boy. In addition, since he had titles with 'the youngest' or 'boy', he looked even younger to her.

'He is not a young boy at all.'

But now, he had grown up and become a young man.

Most of all, her first impression of Ian was when he came with the blizzard,

'He's not bad lookin... '

"Sir Mcgedie."

"Ehk!"

Mcgedie made a weird sound.

Ashamed, she turned her head.

"Please stand there."

"P, pardon?"

"Behind there, near to the window."

But Ian seemed to not care about her at all.

He just ordered her.

"Y, yes sir!"

Mcgedie quickly followed his order.

It was an order of an Archmage.

She moved near the window quickly.

"So what should I do now..."

"Just for a second."

Soon, a new formula was scripted on the Staff of the Great Grass Field. If it synchronizes well with the formula, it would oscillate with the mana. Otherwise, it would be no more than a useless wooden staff. Ian was about to test it.

'Just a little bit.'

As he injected mana into the staff, it started to glow dimly. Not a bloody dark aura of

hallucinations, but a clean transparent grey light.

‘Good.’

Firstly, the formula replacement was successful.
The grey light which he intended had occurred.
In addition, the staff didn’t lose its power.
It could be proved since it oscillated with mana.
Now the next step was testing its effect.
And the proper target was there.



Now the next step was testing its effect.
And the proper target was there.

“Sir Mcgedie.”

“Yes?”

Ian stood up. Then he aimed his staff at Mcgedie’s face, while injecting sufficient mana to operate the new scripted formula.

Wooooom

A grey light from the staff tangled Mcgedie. Soon surprising things happened. A few spells on Mcgedie, such as ‘Face Off’ which changed her face like a male, and the ‘Voice Change’ spell, etc disappeared.

“Eh... huh?”

She started to turn into a female.
Her body and voice started to turn back to her original status.

“Why this... Hik!”

Mcgedie quickly blocked her mouth after hearing her voice. She quickly checked her face. Her smaller nose and thinner chin answered her instead. Every magic that she used to change her appearance was cancelled.

“Cancelation?”

She had learned this magic as well. Although she couldn't use it, she knew some famous high tier spells. And this spell was one of them. It was the spell that 'Dispelled' a target's 'supportive magic' by high chance. It must be 'Cancelation' magic that was scripted on the staff.

“S, sir Ian...?”

She looked at Ian with round eyes. She was requiring Ian to explain this situation.

‘It works well.’

However, Ian couldn't answer to her. His head was full of his staff. He wasn't listening or looking at Mcgedie.

‘Now it would be perfect with the communication orb.’

With Ian's single swing, a communication orb came out from his bag and flew to his hand. Its size and appearance was perfect as the final decoration for the top of the staff.

“Bite it.”

Soon, the staff's branches started to tangle the communication orb as if it could listen Ian's order. It grabbed it solidly.

“That's right. Good boy.”

Ian petted the staff as if treating a dog. Soon, he looked at his surroundings. Naturally, his eyes met with Mcgedie's.

“Where is the great land lord?”

“...What?”

Mcgedie was full of embarrassment.

On the other hand, Ian was calm.

“I better return...”

“W, wait a second, sir Ian!”

Mcgedie blocked Ian's path. She was a little bit worried so she dared to block her senior's path, but she had to listen his answer.

“H, how did you know?”

“What are you asking about?”

“T, that I disguised as a male...”

“Ahh.”

Ian nodded his head with a dry expression.

“I knew it since the very beginning.”

“D, did you?”

“There is a full detailed report about the conducted mages on the Ivory Tower's report, of course. I checked it all before, Mcgedie... I mean, Mary.”

That's right.

What Ian said was natural.

Ian was one of the heads of the Ivory Tower.

He must have known about it.

Mary, which was her real name, started to turn red in the face.

“T, then why didn't you tell...”

“I just thought you had a personal reason. I think the great land lord also knew it already. The personal details of the conducted mage is always handed to the land lord as well.”

It was also quite natural. However, Mary's face was getting more red and red; it seemed like her face was going to blow up. Although it was common sense for the conducted mage, she hadn't think about it.

“Then...”

She started to recall all her past actions. She acted as male in front of Ian, furthermore, to the land lord as well. She recalled from one to ten.

‘I, I am stupid...’

She started to blame herself.

“T, then what about soldiers...?”

“No. They don’t know about that. Me and the land lord, ah, and other conducted mages as well. That’s all the people who knew about you.”

Mary thanked God that at least the soldiers didn’t know about that. If it was figured out they also had known Mary’s identity, it would shame her so much.

“I thought you would know about it. But, I apologize if I offended you.”

“N, no. You don’t have to. It’s just...”

Mary moved to the side unnaturally. She was confused, and wanted to calm down. She didn’t block Ian’s path to receive his apologize.

“T, then do your business!”

At last, she ran out the room.

“Hmm.”

Ian felt he did something wrong.

However, he couldn’t understand her feelings perfectly.

Ian wondered.

‘Doesn’t she just need to disguise herself again?’

No idea.

While scratching his head, Ian left his room. He had to report to the great land lord before leaving the place. Ian finished his mission.

‘Let’s go back to my home.’

It was much more pleasant thing to have a home to return to than Ian had thought.

Beat! Beat!

Even thinking of his home made his heart beat.

It beat really fast...

“...Huh?”

But it seemed much more than normal. Although he had been looking forward to going back home, it was way too much.

Beat! Beat! Beat! Beat!

Literally, the beating sounded as if it would explode soon.

He had never experienced such beating, including both his former and current life. Even drinking multiple half elixirs, which stimulated a mana heart's activity, wouldn't cause his heart to beat like this.

“Ergh...!”

Now he started to feel pain.

He had thought of every possibility.

Was there something wrong with his body?

‘Suddenly, why?’

The heart started to beat faster and rougher.

His mana heart started to release mana.

Ian started to feel dizzy.

‘Perhaps.’

Suddenly, there was one possibility that struck Ian's head.

He realised the state of his mana heart, which was still immature.

“Maybe...”

It might be a sign of his mana heart's growth?

It wasn't sure.

However, it was worth the check.

Ian sat down quickly to mana breathe.

“Phew...!”

While tolerating the severe pain from his heart, Ian started his mana breathing. Although every single breath of his was quite painful, he endured it again and again.

‘If this is what I expect.’

His mana pool hit the limit 5 years ago.
But this time, he might be able to break his limit.
Then, he might overcome the 5th class master.

‘Becoming a 6th class beginner’

Blood flowing in the opposite direction leaked from his lips, nose and ears. It was blood that was dead and dark. Whoever saw Ian’s current status would be shocked. It was fortunate that he wasn’t at home at the moment.

‘If my mother saw this...’

She would faint.
Even in the pool of pain, Ian smiled.
His mana breath was reaching to its end.

CHAPTER 51

BREAK THE LIMIT (2)

“Sir Ian! I heard you awake... S, sir Ian?”

The great land lord Kalian rushed to Ian’s room quickly. He was surprised by Ian’s state. He couldn’t help himself. Ian’s face, body, robe and even the floor was covered by blood

“What on earth... Are you okay?”

“I’m fine.”

Answering the great land lord’s question, Ian stood up. Soon, blood stains on his face started to peel off like smashed bread crumbs.

“I was kind of shedding off my skin.”

“Skin...?”

The great lord thought about its meaning for a while.

But he couldn’t come to any conclusion. What he saying was a mystery to him.

‘He’s weird just like the other mages.’

After a short evaluation, the great lord started his main topic.

“Ah, I am so glad that you’re awake, by the way. Including my gratitude, I have so many things to say, but rushed into here to give you this.”

The great land lord handed him a crystal orb.

It was a mediator of the mana message that came from the communication post.

It was different to the communication orb.

“When you departed for the Great Grass Field, which was around 10 days ago, there was a message that came from the Ivory Tower. The message said that we must show this message whenever your mission was finished, but you fainted... Anyway, check it

in haste."

A message from the Ivory Tower?

What is going on?

Ian quickly received the crystal orb. Quickly, he injected mana to check the content.

"Wait, before that, I have one more thing to give you."

Then, the great lord Kalian pulled something from his inner pocket. It was a letter. It wasn't a mana letter that came through the communication post, but a 'paper letter,' that had emblem of the emperor on it.

"It is a message straight from the emperor, his highness, through the messenger. The emperor strictly ordered me to show this only to you, by my very hand.

"Through the messenger?"

"Yes it is."

The emperor chose to use a messenger and a paper letter, instead of using a communication post. It was risky method that might fail due to time delay. But he chose that way, for what reason?

'A letter that shouldn't be known to the Ivory Tower,'

Or due to the contents, the Ivory Tower might manipulate to delay the message on purpose. Anyway, both situations were evaluating into one conclusion. The letter must be something about against the will of the Ivory Tower.

'Let's read the Ivory Tower's message first.'

By injecting mana, blue letters were starting to be released. Familiarly, it was the typical phenomenon of the mana letter.

[This is a message for the Archmage, Ian Page. Since it contains some contents that may interrupt the progress of Ian Page's mission, the Ivory Tower asked us to delay the message. We apologize for that.]

Something that may interrupt his mission?

Soon the next sentences were drawn on the sky.

[There was a little problem that happened at your house. An unknown stranger had invaded your house, but thanks to the guards, your families and properties are safe. Currently, they are under the cover of the royalty and the Ivory Tower, so we inform you that you have no need to worry about them, by this letter.]

There were a few extras things, but that was the core part of the content. In summary, there was an invasion, and guards arrested the stranger, and since the royalty and the Ivory Tower were caring for them, there was nothing to worry about this.

‘The Ivory Tower wants me to worry about them.’

They sent this letter to make Ian unstable, on purpose, obviously. However, problem was that it made Ian feel uncomfortable as it was intended. He wanted to go back to his family right now.

‘Let’s decide on it after I read the emperor’s letter.’

Ian barely calmed down his mind.

Now, Ian started to read the emperor’s message.

[To my dearest mage, and friend of my son, Ian Page.]

Unlike the straight forwardness of the Ivory Tower’s letter, the emperor’s letter kept its form. Nevertheless he must have written this letter in a hasty situation. His letter was neat, but still gentle.

[If this letter is successfully handed over to you, that would mean that there is still a little hope left for me and my son. By thanking goddess of luck, I want to ask one favor from you.]

The emperor emphasized that he was asking for his favor, not ordering.

[Since you might have not noticed due to the divine duty of being an Archmage, the great council will be held soon at the free city, ‘Demidera’, for the conquest of monsters at the Great Grass Field.]

‘Why is it being held so early?’

Ian was surprised.

It supposed to be happened a few years later.

The past Ian had known had changed.

[Including your friend, the Crown Prince, Hayden Greenriver, the 5th prince Ragnar Greenriver, the Tower Lord Habert Leon, the great captain of the imperial army Duncan Mitos and so on, they are chosen to be sent to the council. While you are reading this, they might have already started their journey to Demidera.]

But, the situation was the same as his former life.

The most important point of this council was Ragnar.

From this council, he started to appeal himself and started to build his own social power quickly.

It was his debut stage for succeeding.

‘In my former life, it was a critical point where the Crown Prince started to fall.’

On the other hand, Ragnar showed his outstanding diplomatic skills at this council. As result, not only nobles, but even other people of the emperor acknowledged Ragnar’s talent, and acknowledged the Crown Prince’s uselessness.

[In this journey, there is no one who can be the Crown Prince’s eyes and mouths. The captain Oliver is very loyal man, but he is just a warrior. So I ask my favor to Ian Page, the friend of the Crown Prince, please head to Demidera, and help him. In the name of emperor, I will protect your families by bringing them to my palace.]

There was indeed, a special reason the emperor sent this letter.

He was chasing a last hope.

He wished Ian Page might able to help the Crown Prince to become more than an idiot prince.

“...”

Ian closed his eyes.

He started to evaluate this situation, by comparing his former life and current state.

‘It seems the Tower Lord planned this situation.’

Ian couldn’t even be able to guess from since when he was involved.

Even the invasion from the Great Grass Field monsters might be one of his whole plan,

or maybe some part of it. Ian's head was filled with complex thinking. However, at this moment, he had to decide quickly.

'Family or favor of the Emperor?'

Those strangers, who invaded the Ian's mansion, could be sent by the Tower Lord, to bind down Ian to his home.

'He knows me very well.'

Perhaps the Tower Lord hadn't stopped collecting information about Ian sneakily. He must have figured out that Ian was obsessed with his family. If the Tower Lord manipulated this event on purpose, he made a decent plan, indeed.

'I would rush to my family.'

Whether it was a deceiving movement or not, he wouldn't hesitate about it. Until yesterday.

'Precisely, just before a few minutes ago.'

Massive amounts of mana was flowing through Ian's vein.

Ian entered to the 6th class without a doubt.

The level was achieved with the following title, 'First 6th class human'.

'6th class has their own special 6th class magic.

Such magic that the Tower Lord wouldn't even dare to imagine.

Such magic that had no records left.

And Ian had reached the level where he could cast such magic.

The 6th class Archmage.

"Haha."

Ian laughed lightly.

He only made such a smile when he felt superiority.

"What is going on? What's on the letter?"

After a long silence, the great land lord asked curiously. Considering his characteristics, he waited a long time.

“Great land lord.”

“I am listening.”

“I protected you and your territory, didn’t I?”

Ian asked something out of topic.

But still, Kalian admitted it by nodding his head.

“Of course, you are the savior to me, this province, and its people.”

“Then can I ask you for one favor?”

“Anything you want. I was wondering how I may be able to repay the grace you have given to me.”

Kalian said while beating his chest with his fist.

Indeed, he was fitted better as a warrior, rather than a leader.

“Please protect me for a while.”

Ian’s eyes were bright.

As a 6th class mage, he knew how to turn the tide.



Freedom, Neutral, Trading, Port.

The free city ‘Demidera’, had many titles. At such a place where the council would be held, the embassy from the Greenriver Empire had arrived, including the Crown Prince, ‘Hayden Greenriver’.

“I know it’s late, but what about we call Ian now?”

In the carriage, the Crown Prince’s face was darkening. From the Tower Lord to the Great Captain of the Imperial Army, and all the other core members of the embassy were standing on the 5th prince’s side, Ragnar. It wouldn’t be easy for him.

“Stand still, my lord. No one would able to harm you.”

Oliver was right. They were not even thinking about it, nor they could they harm him, since they were ordered to protect the Crown Prince. Except the Tower Lord, most of the other members of the embassy just supported Ragnar as the 'Proper Reclaimer' and not followed him as their 'lord.' Since they were ordered to protect him by the current Emperor, they would protect him with their best.

"But still, it makes me nervous. I miss Ian so much. But he is busy for doing some duty of Archmage..."

While the Crown Prince was uncomfortable, on the other hand, the 5th prince Ragnar was full of confidence. He was full of the proudness of a powerful and smart man. He didn't ride the carriage. He rode on the horse and went through journey from the royal palace to this place.

"You all did your job very well. Today, I will prepare the dinner party for you guys, please enjoy."

"Wow!"

Furthermore, he was building a good relationship with the guards and knights who were body guarding the embassy. Literally, he was the text book of a 'good leader'. Even the lowest ranked soldier supported the 5th prince for being the next emperor.

'He matured very well.'

The Tower Lord looked at Ragnar with a warm smile. Finally, the long awaited fruits had bloomed and were about to reveal its power to the whole world. Finally, a moment had arrived, a moment that the empire became 'the Empire of the Ivory Tower'.

'The time of harvest has come.'

For today, he planned and prepared for a long time. He persuaded Helene to work for him, who was almost wasted. Through her, he did many unofficial movements. He brought a maelstrom to the Great Grass Field, and with that he created a chance to hold the council of the three countries. It could be done with his unique social power and network.

'And I removed the unexpected interrupter.'

He already knew the characteristics of the most annoying interrupter, Ian Page.

Ian always set his family as a first priority.

Whenever his families were related, he would dare to against the whole empire.

‘He must be rushing to the royal palace.’

Of course, he didn’t touch the family directly. He just let few thieves to invade his home. It was good enough, wasn’t it? There was no proof the Tower Lord manipulated this event. Since he sent him far out earlier before, It would take a lot of time for Ian to go back to his family.

‘And after this council nearly finishes, the Crown Prince will be...’

When the Tower Lord was sure about his plan, people started to make some noise, while looking up something coming from the sky.

“...?”

The Tower Lord also looked up the sky. From the sky, a man with a robe was approaching; with a blue robe, decent flying skills and a familiar silhouette.

“Ian!”

The Crown Prince recognized him first, and he rushed out from the carriage. His pressured face was no more. His handsome face started to make a decent smile. He almost screamed.

“I – AN – !”

The Crown Prince shouted at Ian.

While jumping around, he shook his both hands.

In front of him, the man with the blue robe landed.

Soon, he kneeled down with one leg to the ground and bowed.

“Sorry for being late, your highness.”

The man was Ian Page, who was supposed to rush to the royal palace, and instead had appeared at the free city, Demidera, in front of the embassy of the Greenriver Empire.

‘How?’

It was the Tower Lord who was shocked at first.
What was he doing here?

It didn't make sense at all.
It was much more than just out of expectation.

"Did he indeed, give up his family?"



At the same time, at the royal palace located at the capital Greenriverdium. Vanessa, Ledio and Douglas was staying at the royal palace. Since the stranger invaded the mansion; they were staying in the special room of the royal palace. Numberless guards were protecting them.

"I want to see boss."

Douglas murmured. It seemed he wasn't scared about the strangers that much, rather, he seemed he wanted to go to the academy as soon as possible.

"Soon, you will, my son."

After a short reply, Ledio looked at Vanessa. Although a lot of time had passed since the invasion, she still seemed uncomfortable.

"Mrs. Page. Do not worry. We are in the palace where our highness stays, aren't we? There will be no place safer than here."

Even with Ledio's trying, Vanessa made a weak smile. She was trying to endure, but she wanted to see Ian. Only after see his very face, she might be calm down.

"The Ivory Tower sent the message to him, didn't they? Soon, sir Ian would open the door and say 'Tada!...'"

Ledio wanted to change the atmosphere.
Nothing more than that.
But.

"Tada."

As he said, Ian appeared. The door was opened, and the blue robe young man came in. It was the man who they had awaited for long, Ian Page. It seemed Ian was listening what Ledio was saying.

“Huh...?”

“Boss!”

Ledio and Douglas reacted first with Ian’s appearance. Ian also said hello to them lightly. Then soon, he stepped towards his mother.

“Sorry for being late, mom.”

Ian held his mother’s shaking hands. The man, who was supposed to kneel down in front of the Crown Prince, was meeting his family at same time.

CHAPTER 52

BREAK THE LIMIT (3)

From the 6th class onwards, there were only tiny amounts of records that were left. There was no one who 'officially' achieved the level. Hence there only a few spells that were known for such a class. In his former life, Ian made usable spells by himself, or found out some formulas from old unknown resourced books.

"From now on, the best warriors of the Pieric Province will protect Sir Ian with me, Kalian. With the honor of a true warrior, we won't let even a small mice be able to approach him. Do you copy?"

At the basement of the Pieric Province castle, the great land lord Kalian Pieric's abandoned gymnasium.

Together with the great land lord with his duel axes, his warriors blocked the path completely. At Ian's favor, they were protecting Ian with their best.

"Yes! My lord!"

Inside of such protection, there was Ian's 'main body' lying on the wall, unconsciously. With the conducted mage 'Mary' who gave up disguising like a male.

'If there is any problem, inject mana in my head. Then I will wake up.'

That's what Ian had asked from Mary.

Thanks to that, she was positioned right next to Ian.

'I have never seen such magic.'

Mary recalled the spell Ian had casted.

It seemed similar to the Mirror Image spell, but its characteristics were totally different.

'What was the name? Puppet Play, was it?'

Puppet Play.

Literally, Ian was 'playing puppets'.

While the 'Mirror Image' spell only made fake illusions that couldn't do anything but standing, this 6th class spell was much more than that. Not only could these two puppets freely move, but also these puppets could cast 5th class magic. The main body became unconscious and became the 'controller', and that was the weakest point of this spell.

'Let's focus, focus.'

Mary stopped thinking deeply.

As Ian had asked from her, she paid attention and was alert.

'He told me to protect him.'

He didn't tell her what he is doing with Puppet Play, but Ian was her life savior, wasn't he? Not only her but all those soldiers, warriors and the great land lord owed their life to Ian. To pay back his grace, they all focused on protecting Ian.



"You came! You came!"

The Crown Prince Hayden spoke loudly like an excited child.

He was so relieved now.

Ian appeared at the best moment.

It was a glimpse of hope for the Crown Prince.

"I bet we are connected! I was about to call you. I even asked this to the captain. Haha!"

The Crown Prince only took a few seconds to regain his confidence. Ian didn't come here to support the Crown Prince, but it made Ian smile. Maybe because he was the man who Ian had spent the most time with except his family?

'I might start to like him.'

Ian's second life was different to from his former life in many aspects.

After simile Ian looked at the Tower Lord and Ragnar.

It was exciting to see their embarrassed faces.

‘He made a similar face when I destroyed the mana storage a few years ago.’

Especially the Tower Lord’s face turned anxious.

Ian’s appearance must’ve been way out of his farthest expectations.

Although he managed his face quite well, but Ian had already looked at his facial expression long enough.

“Ah, it is you, Ian.”

Pretending he was fine, the Tower Lord approached.

He said to Ian like usual.

“I heard that you completed the mission successfully, by the report from the Pieric great land lord. I heard it was so tough that it caused you to faint. You did a great job for the Empire.”

“It is my duty, I did what I have to do.”

Ian replied as usual, as well.

It was the typical conversation between the Tower Lord and an Archmage.

But soon,

“However, what are you doing here? If you had rest enough, you’re supposed to go back to the Ivory Tower and do your business. Perhaps, you didn’t heard about what happened to your famil...”

“I received a letter from the Ivory Tower. However, I also received a letter from the Emperor, his highness which ordered me to come here and help the Crown Prince, his highness.”

While saying that, Ian showed the Emperor’s letter.

It wasn’t the secret letter that Ian had read before.

It was the official order document that was attached to the letter.

“May I read it?”

“As you wish.”

It was an order with the Emperor Terry Greenriver’s signet.

After checking his signet, the Tower Lord started to read the letter nervously.

‘I knew he would do something, but...’

He didn’t expect this letter to be handed to Ian successfully, nor that Ian would decide to come here while leaving his family behind.

‘It seems lady luck smiled on you this time, your highness.’

However, the Tower Lord didn’t want Ian to join the embassy, of course. In addition there were many excuses to refuse Ian to join the embassy. He had a back up plan.

“I can see it is an order from the Emperor, his highness, but I’m afraid you can’t join us.”

At the Tower Lord’s calm reaction

“Why? Do you dare go against my father’s will?”

The Crown Prince reacted furiously.

Of course, the Tower Lord didn’t care about him at all.

“Your highness. This council is about trust between the three countries. We had agreed to limit the numbers of embassy and guards. We agreed to it, we can’t just change our number of embassy. Hmm Hmm!”

After short pause, the Tower Lord continued his words.

“The basics of diplomacy is trust, my lord, even a single additional soldier would cause a big problem. Then, how can we add arch mage to our embassy? I am sure the Emperor knows this council’s importance, and he would understand my action.”

What the Tower Lord said was true.

Although these three countries weren’t at war, they had contested each other for a long time. As such the three countries would meet at one place with a reclaimer, soldiers and embassy from each country. They treated this meeting quite sensitively, and they barely made this meeting with many considering it. If one of the countries tried to against this agreement, the meeting will be ruined at the very beginning.

“The foundation of diplomacy is trust, indeed.”

Ian admitted the Tower Lord's excuse.

Archmages were like war machines. Already 2 Archmages and one Tower Lord was involved in the embassy. What would happen if one more Archmage was added to the list?

"The meeting will be ruined completely."

The emperor also didn't want Ian to join the embassy. He just wanted Ian to over watch the Crown Prince and not let him do anything foolish and control him, or give some simple advice to him. The Emperor already knew the Crown Prince always listened to Ian's advice carefully.

"I understand what you are worrying about, Tower Lord."

However, Ian had a plan, a decent plan that he could join the embassy without causing any diplomatic problems.

"Then, please return. Even your existence in the city might cause severe diplomatic problems. I am sorry for your effort, but I can't help with it."

The Tower Lord said as if he really felt sorry for him.

His voice was full of confidence.

He never lost his gentle manner.

The more he stands higher than his opponent, the more gentle he acted.

"I will explain to the Emperor, his highness by myself..."

"But, what if,"

Ian cut down the Tower Lord's words.

Still, the Tower Lord didn't reveal his unpleasantness.

Yet.

"If one of Archmages decides to leave the embassy, may I replace him instead? The Emperor ordered me previously, so I think that it may be allowed flexibly."

With Ian's words, the Tower Lord glanced at the Archmages who came as members of the embassy. They followed his orders like an emperor. There was no chance for them to betray him.

‘Indeed. No chance.’

He had been the Tower Lord for more than 30 years. He had known every single Archmage for a long time, and he poured a lot of time and effort to persuade them to stand on his side. Some took a few years, some took more than 10 years.

‘Except those youngsters.’

It seemed as an idol of young mages, Ian Page became arrogant due to his young followers.

“Haha. If so, yes you can. But who...”

When the Tower Lord said with laughing,

“I,”

An Archmage ‘Ronan’, who was one of the members of the embassy, said while stepping out. It was an old man who passionately claimed to put shackle on Ian’s neck a few years ago during the council of the Ivory Tower.

“I will be absent for the embassy.”

“...What are you saying, Ronan?”

Again, the Tower Lord said with gentleness on his face.

Ronan used to be the one of the most strict and powerful allies to the Tower Lord.

“As I just said. We are people of the Empire, aren’t we? There is no person who can go against the order of our Emperor, his highness. Even if it is about a diplomatic problem.”

With a solid attitude, the Archmage Ronan continued his speech.

“I had learned that the mission of the embassy is a very sacred mission. However, if I can fulfill this diplomatic agreement and the Emperor’s order at the same time by leaving my position, I would gladly give my position to Ian.”

After that, Ronan approached the Crown Prince.

Soon, he bowed to him by kneeling down on one of his legs.

“This old man humbly asks the Crown Prince, your highness, to pass over this sacred mission to Ian Page. Please allow me to do, your highness.”

It was the Crown Prince who had all authority officially.

Although he only had title of authority, his word was powerful enough to solve this issue.

“Of course! You can go back to the royal palace.”

The Crown Prince didn’t hesitate for a single moment.

There was no consideration needed since Ian would replace the vacancy.

“Ah, just a moment.”

The Crown Prince searched through the carriage as he remembered something. Soon, he brought a few jewelries and accessories and handed those to Ronan.

“Use it whenever you need money for your journey. Go and buy some carriages, hire some horsemen as well, okay?”

“...I, I appreciate your grace, your highness.”

The first present from the Crown Prince embarrassed Ronan for a short moment. Soon after, Ronan approached Ian. Since he turned his back to others, only Ian could see clear smile on Ronan’s face.

“Ian, from now on, you will replace my position as embassy. Please follow the Emperor’s order carefully.”

The middle aged Archmage, ‘Ronan’.

He was one of ‘can be persuaded Archmages’ according to his former experience. Although he was always extremely strict and straight, his action wasn’t focused to show ‘loyalty’ to the Tower Lord, nor ‘stand’ on the side of the Ivory Tower,

‘He only moves for his individual magical talent development.’

Every mage liked to be developed, but Ronan was obsessed with it. Most of the other Archmages stopped training themselves hard while instead going through an easy and

supported life from the Empire. But his thirst of magic was getting bigger and bigger as he got older.

‘I knew he would be persuaded by simply teaching him my enhanced mana breathing.’

He didn’t like Ian due to the result of inferiority. However, after he learnt magic from Ian individually, he didn’t feel inferiority from Ian any more. Instead, he wanted to learn more from him. Especially after he learnt Ian’s special mana breathing, he completely turned to ‘Ian’s side.’ It was just because learning from Ian enhanced him much faster than learning under the Tower Lord for 15 years.

“Thank you, senior.”

“No problem at all, It is our duty as the people of the Empire, isn’t it?”

After meaningless talk, Ronan whispered to Ian.

“After this event finishes, teach me more of that.”

‘That’ must be meant mana breathing. After Ian nodded, Ronan left the place quickly. And he didn’t forget to recite what the Tower Lord had said.

“Then, this old man may leave this area quickly. Even my existence in the city might cause severe diplomatic problem... As the Tower Lord said.”

It wasn’t in the Tower Lord’s plan. His plan had been ruined fluently. Ian appeared suddenly, Ronan betrayed him suddenly, and Ian joined to the embassy all of sudden.

“Ha, Haha...”

With a complicated mind, the Tower Lord laughed.

There was deep sinking feeling and anger in his laugh.

CHAPTER 53

UNEXPECTED HERO (1)

The free city 'Demidera' was not involved with any country, and literally it was a 'free neutral city.' The other three big countries also admitted the necessity of Demidera, so the city had existed as a neutral city for hundreds of years.

"Come this way."

The 'Mayor' of Demidera, Engolo, lead the embassy of Greenriver himself. The great merchants were the nobles of the free city, and they voted for the Mayor every 6 years, and Engolo was elected as the 19th Mayor.

"What about the other embassies?"

"We lead them to each guest mansion."

Demidera remained neutral with the support of the three countries. Of course, they had luxurious guest mansions for each country. It was superior to most of the giant luxurious mansion in the continent, 20 percent of the city's budget was used for maintaining such guest mansions.

"You may use this guest mansion. And for His Highness the Crown Prince, please use that special mansion over there. It's only for the most precious guest."

Indeed, there was the biggest and the most luxurious mansion, compared to the other mansions. The Crown Prince looked at the mansion.

"Hmm. Not bad, indeed."

Satisfied, the Crown Prince nodded.

He would stay there for a week, and it was quite an outstanding mansion.

"Hey, Tower Lord. Are there any other schedules for a while?"

The Crown Prince asked the Tower Lord.

His unique arrogance had come back.

“Until the council, we don’t have any specific schedules.”

“Hmm, is that so?”

While touching his chin, he smiled. There were many days still left until the council. He was looking forward to enjoying all the entertainment of the free city.

“Good. Everyone take a rest. Ian, you come with me. Come on.”

After that, the Crown Prince headed to the inner side of the great mansion, followed by Ian, Oliver, the 2nd royal knights and servants.

“Tower Lord.”

After a while, the 5th prince Ragnar called the Tower Lord.

His voice was in a little bit of a hurry, and a very tiny expression that most people wouldn’t recognize.

“Yes, your Highness.”

Ragnar went into the guest mansion.

The Tower Lord followed him quietly.

They needed a place for their secret conversation.

“I won’t blame you for this.”

That was Ragnar’s first words after arriving in the room.

‘This’ meant Ian’s unexpected interruption.

“But, the mage who sticks next to my brother,”

Ragnar also had been looking forward to this council.

It was his political debut stage. While the idiot Crown Prince was wasting this precious chance, he planned to become a hero of this council. However, an unexpected interruption had just appeared at the last moment.

“He keeps making me uncomfortable. This time again, I feel something bad about him.”

“I understand.”

The Tower Lord agreed.

He also felt uncomfortable about Ian, especially today.

“However, do not worry too much. Ian Page has great magical talent indeed, but we are dealing with diplomacy here.”

Ian was only 17 years old. He was not royalty, nor a noble. Although he showed many unexpected achievements, but diplomacy was out of his profession. Where he could learn the art of diplomacy?

“There are very little things that he could do with magic. He wouldn’t have a chance to speak. Even if he has a chance, he will have nothing to tell. What can that little boy think of?”

Archmages invited to the council were just decoration, a decoration to show off each country’s magical power. Only the Tower Lord might have a chance to speak.

“All processes and results of diplomacy are decided by speeches and plans. Your highness, you will be the hero of this council as you have prepared.”

The Tower Lord also felt uncomfortable and anger in his mind, but they had planned this for many years. The empire of the Ivory Tower, its key was the 5th prince. The Tower Lord tried not to sway the 5th prince’s mind.

“Sigh, I see. I see, but still his existence makes me feel uncomfortable. As soon as possible, deal with him, please.”

During past the 5 years, Ragnar’s hatred towards Ian had grown like a snowball. He tried many things to persuade Ian, but every time he failed. Most of the time, he didn’t even have a chance to say hello to Ian.

‘You dare ignore me?’

Ragnar’s surface characteristic was artificially made by himself. Talented, but gentle and kind, a prince who planned to be a great Emperor. Until he had social power, he decided to live like that. However, the bastard ,Ian, drew out his true characteristics for the first time.

“Eliminate him, by any means necessary,”

“Do not worry about him as well.”

The Tower Lord had prepared many things since 5 years ago, to obtain the dangerous weapon called Ian Page. From dark magic, incantation of shamans, to various voodoos from far away continents.

“Soon, it will be done as you wish.”

“That’s good to hear.”

While the Tower Lord and 5th prince were having a secret conversation, Ian went into the great mansion with the Crown Prince. It was nothing inferior to the mansion Ian received from the Emperor.

“Let’s see. As I know, Demidera’s night street festivals are quite fascinating, it must be so fun. Haha!”

The Crown Prince’s mind was already full of playing. He had no awareness of the responsibility of the council. If the Emperor saw him, it would make him sigh, and Ian and Oliver felt same.

‘No way.’

It would be Ragnar’s debut stage, and the start of the Crown Prince’s fall. Although it was a few years earlier than his former life, its essence was the same.

‘Dividing the army power of the conquest, and perfectly dividing territory and aboriginal slaves.’

Ragnar created many benefits for the Greenriver Empire through this council in his former life. In addition, he solved the tricky problem of dividing territory. It must be similar to his former life.

‘Only if I let him do so.’

Of course, Ian wouldn’t let him do that. He would do his best to prevent Ragnar from receiving any credit. To do that,

‘I need that idiot.’

Although it had been 5 years, the Crown Prince was still an idiot. However, he was the only chess piece that Ian had. Although he wasn't a good chess piece, Ian had no choice. The Crown Prince had an authority to speak first among this embassy.

“Sigh...”

After sighing, Ian approached the Crown Prince.

The Crown Prince already had ordered a few servants to investigate details of nearby entertaining points and foods, while giving a lot of money to their hands.

“I need to sneak out, so bring me some cloths to cover myself. No luxury decorations, it will reveal me too easily. The most normal cloth you can find, okay?”

“Your highness.”

“Ah! And you guys know that I hate red color, right?”

“Your highness.”

“Huh? Why, Ian?”

Finally the Crown Prince looked at Ian.

His eyes were full of innocence.

“You can't go out anywhere.”

“What? Why? We still have a lot of time...”

“You had to prepare.”

“We can prepare for next few da...”

“We have to start right now.”

Ian nailed him. He never allowed the Crown Prince to make any excuses. Others wouldn't dare to reply to him like that, but only Ian could.

“It is you who has authority to speak first among the embassy. If you can't say anything, the 5th prince will intercept your chance.”

“My father has already told me...”

“Being honest, the 5th prince will be hero of this council doubtlessly. He must have prepared for this long. Do you still want him to do so?”

“Ehmmmm...”

The Crown Prince's face turned ugly quickly.

The stage where the 5th prince became the hero?

The Crown Prince never wanted him to be, he would rather choose to die.

“H, honestly”

By Ian’s word, the Crown Prince had thought for a while. Soon, he pulled out some bunch of papers from his individual container. Then he said while handing it to Ian.

“My father gave me few advice before I came here. Of course, he didn’t give me an answer though.”

Ian had opened the papers. It was written in detail about the background of this council, and what they may debate about, and what problems they were facing. In addition it seemed the Emperor wrote it himself.

“He asked me to fill in its blank, so I tried my best, but...”

Under the written details, there were also the Crown Prince’s answers. The Emperor asked him to fill in the blanks, and the Crown Prince tried his best. Of course it was full of garbage. It was rather surprising that he actually tried to fill it in.

‘The Emperor must be in a complicated state of mind.’

Ian could understand the reason why the Emperor didn’t give an answer. The Emperor was smart man. He knew the Crown Prince wasn’t the type of man who was good enough to be a good Emperor.

‘He wanted the Crown Prince to improve himself.’

The Crown Prince was definitely not good enough to be the next emperor, but the Emperor loved him so much. He wanted him to learn while listening to the debates between other talented smart men.

“Honestly, I have no idea. Army force and supplement blah blah, territory and slaves blah blah. I definitely will be laughed if I suggest some stupid idea, so it may be better for me to shut my mouth.”

The Crown Prince looked depressed.

He must have thought about it a lot.

He must’ve wanted to run away and forget it by playing around in the numberless

amounts of entertainment in the city.

‘I won’t be able to fulfill the Emperor’s wish, though.’

Wait until he learns himself?

Sitting next to him during debate?

Ian had no time to wait.

Instead, he could give him some answers.

‘To prevent him from being laughed at.’

Determined, Ian checked the Crown Prince’s bunch of papers one by one. Soon, by using mana, Ian erased the dried ink, the answers of the Crown Prince.

“I will give you the answers.”

“Huh? What answer?”

“I will give you every question of the council, and its every solution. So your highness, until the council day, your job is,”

Ian didn’t write it himself.

However, many numbers of pens were writing in the air, automatically. They were writing everything that Ian knew about the council, and contents which made Ragnar as a hero of the council in his former life.

“Memorize it. You must.”

Of course, Ian had an alternative plan in case the Crown Prince didn’t make it.

However, he wanted to give a chance to the Crown Prince, to establish something by himself.

‘And it’s better to have a stronger chess piece.’

From that day, a week had passed. Contrary to the others’ expectations, the Crown Prince hadn’t left the guest mansion once. He didn’t even sneak out. Being honest, the soldiers had always known whenever he had sneaked out. They just pretended not to acknowledge him. But this time, he really didn’t sneak out.

“What is he doing in the mansion?”

The imperial soldiers whispered quietly.

“He called a lot of whores, maybe?”

“Ah ha, playing with them inside, right?”

There were two reactions that came from the imperial soldiers. One of the reactions came from the soldiers who still believed the old rumors that the Crown Prince was a dirty stupid pig,

“But didn’t he change a lot recently?”

“Ah yes. I told you before, didn’t I? When I was guarding at the royal palace, I met him, right? Then he tapped my shoulders and encouraged me...”

There were a few soldiers who recognized the change of the Crown Prince during the previous 5 years. Of course, the ones who still didn’t trust him outnumbered those.

“But what’s all that for? We have the 5th prince, his highness.”

Of course, both those cases still respected the 5th prince much more. It was natural. Ragnar had lived the perfect life for the previous 19 years on purpose.

“Perhaps this time as well...”

When they were getting excited about this topic, a handsome blonde man was walking from a distance, followed by a knight and a mage.

It was the Crown Prince, Captain, and Archmage.

He finally left the mansion.

“Y, your highness!”

Soldiers guarding near the great mansion bowed to him. They were afraid because they heard rumors that the mage can enhance his ears to listen to quiet sounds. Although they whispered really quietly, they couldn’t make sure about it.

“Ah, you guys are doing a good job.”

Fortunately, such a tragedy didn’t happen to them it seemed, since the Crown Prince smiled to them while waving his hand. As they know, he wouldn’t easily neglect such rudeness.

“Y, your highness, we will prepare guards right know...”

“No.”

The Crown Prince shook his hand.

“Its quite near to here, no need. What was its name, the city council meeting room, right? Anyway, the council will be held there today, right? I just want to visit there early.”

The soldiers knew it of course.

They were ordered to bring the Crown Prince to the place at the afternoon.

However, the problem was that it was morning.

Why was he going to the meeting room this early morning?

“Your highness, I apologize, but the first meeting will be held at today in the afternoon...”

“I know, I know. I just want to do some practice.”

Practice? What practice?

With curious eyes, soldiers looked up briefly, to check the Crown Prince's face.

“...?”

Soon, every soldiers was shocked. There was no any naughty facial expression on the Crown Prince, but he looked very tired. Look at those dark shadows under his eyes, withered chick and purple colored lip. They had no idea what had happened to him, but it seemed like he went through some great suffering.

‘What the hell did he do?’

Did he really play around with whores all day and all night?

But then, what practice did he have to do?

Soldiers couldn't dare imagine what he meant.

‘Have no idea.’

The soldiers gave up guessing about it.

They stepped back and made a path for the Crown Prince and his followers.

'Whatever! He's with the Captain and the Archmage, he wouldn't need our guard anyway.'

However, the soldiers did not know.

At the council between the three countries that would be held in a few more days, unexpected consequence would shake the council, and change the destiny of the Crown Prince, Hayden.

CHAPTER 54

UNEXPECTED HERO (2)

Well, every one to his trade, they say.'

During this week, that was Ian's evaluation of the Crown Prince. He was not bad at memorizing. Of course, Ian supported him with a few supportive spells to reduce his tiredness, but still, he did much more than Ian had expected.

'He actually impressed me.'

Since Ian had no expectations of him at all, the Crown Prince's passion for learning moved Ian deeply. It was the best moment of the Crown Prince Ian ever had experienced.

'Of course, dealing with the real situation is a different story though.'

The council would be held at the town hall of the neutral city, Demidera, the biggest meeting room in it. Only the retainers of each country, one high ranking soldier who could make a decision about their armies and supplies, and two Archmages who could discuss of magical support were allowed to attend the meeting.

"There are many familiar faces.'

Ian had rewound his time, and was the main hero who united three countries into one. He knew most of celebrities from each country.

'I hope he doesn't get too pressured.'

Would the Crown Prince manage to make his own speech? Ian started to worry even before its start.

'Wait. Why I am worrying about him?'

Ian scratched his cheek with awkwardness. He never imagined a day would come

when he worried about the Crown Prince. Except his mother, Ledio, and Douglas, it was Ian's first time worrying about someone in his new life.

'Maybe, it's not my first time.'

Suddenly, he recalled 5 years ago that he had sent advice to the Crown Prince about the fashionable society. He did it because he worried about the Crown Prince.

'... Let's stop thinking about it.'

While Ian was in denial,

The arbiter of this meeting, mayor Engolo, had entered the great council room. He wore very formal clothes.

"My name is Engolo Navil, 19th mayor of Demidera and arbiter of this council. From now on, every word spoken here will be recorded, and I have authority to halt this meeting, in emergency. Please remember that."

With this introduction from the mayor, the council started. Since it had been 10 years since the last meeting of the 3 countries, the atmosphere was heavy and full of nervousness. There were more than 3 thousand of soldiers from each country staying near the city. A direct intermediary was definitely required between the 3 countries...

"As you know, since our Principality's path to the great grass field is narrow and rough, we can't operate large squads and supply chains. So, we want to support this conquest by mages and elite knights rather than soldiers, and money rather than supplies."

The starting topic was deciding army supports and its method.

The true social power holder of the principality of Lo, Duke Benart, his son 'Maxwell Benart' spoke his first claim with the continent official language. Even if it wasn't his mother language, he spoke it fluently.

"Actually, we already discussed this with Coldwood Empire before. Ah, do not misunderstand, though. If the Greenriver Empire minds this decision, we will gladly renegotiate it."

While saying that, Maxwell looked at Hayden Greenriver. Soon, other people looked at him as well. The problem was only their 'eyes' were heading to the Crown Prince.

'Their ears are focusing on Ragnar'

They already have enough information about the Crown Prince. The succession issue of Greenriver Empire was quite famous. The great current Emperor tried to keep the Crown Prince as his successor Crown Prince, but this stupid Crown Prince hadn't made it easy. They also knew of the 5th prince's talent.

'Say it like you practiced.'

In the meeting room, only Ian had hope that the Crown Prince would give a proper answer. So, Ian was more desperate.

"..."

However, the Crown Prince Hayden couldn't open his mouth easily. The 5th prince Ragnar, who was sitting next to him, prepared to start his speech as he knew it. He was sure this idiot Crown Prince wouldn't be able to answer.

"Instead of the Crown Prince highness, I..."

When Ragnar was about to start his speech,

"...About the army supports,"

The Crown Prince started his speech as he decided.

Soon, everyone's ears focused on the Crown Prince.

"I would give authority to our Empire's great commander, the flawless strategic leader, Dunken Mitos. I already have an expert of war here, so I do not have to talk about this personally, do I?"

The Crown Prince's voice was full of nervous.

Although his voice shook little bit, but he didn't falter

“Sir Dunken.”

“Ah, yes. I will give an answer instead.”

Complimented, the great commander quickly organized his thoughts. He wasn't embarrassed because of the Crown Prince's compliment, but his attitude. He hadn't expected the Crown Prince to say it like that.

“This old man thinks, about the request of Principality of Lo...”

Although he was confused about the Crown Prince's action, Dunken Mitos did his best as he was ordered. He had thought Ragnar would be a better Emperor, but he was still very loyal to the current Emperor and his country. He did what he could for his Empire.



‘Good start.’

With this scene, Ian was relieved.

The beginning of the meeting was much better than Ian had expected. Although the Crown Prince simply answered an expected question, he chose correct answer among those many answers he had prepared with Ian.

‘Just keep going.’

Not just worrying, now Ian started to cheer for the Crown Prince.

Ian didn't deny it now.

That man was doing something good.

The man who Ian thought was just an idiot was doing a great job.

‘Let people reconsider about your real talent.’

After that, the council flew relatively fluently. The Crown Prince spoke when he had to, and kept silence when he had to. He strictly followed what Ian had taught him, which he had practised more than a thousand times.

‘The last moment is coming.’

Ian felt comfortable now.

As he expected, soon they would discuss about ‘dividing’ territory and resources of the great grass field after conquest.

‘The most important part of today’s meeting.’

Not only Ian, but all of the others’ thought this was the most important one.

The great grass field was affluent. Plenty of resources were expected to come out of the field. Dividing it fairly, or take some advantage in this process was the biggest aiming point of today’s meeting for the three countries.

“Let’s deal with this straightly.”

The Crown Prince of Coldwood Empire, ‘Hector Coldwood’ said while tapping his knee. Unlike the Greenriver Empire, the Crown Prince was the core of Coldwood’s political power.

‘He killed all of his brothers except those born from his mother.’

Contrary to his cool voice, he was cold and a serpent-like man. The man that was the biggest block for uniting three countries in Ian’s former life, continued his words.

“Dividing into three spaces equally? That wouldn’t be fair. Each territory has different kind and amount resources, and its quality is various. Who would want to play random number game here?”

Although the great grass field was an affluent territory, there were huge differences between its areas. Furthermore, considering hidden resources under the ground, the difference was bigger. If they just considering its distance to their own country and divide this land into three pieces equally, one of them might regret it.

“If we do so, there must be at least one country who would receive extra benefits over others. And it will ruin our relationships. And ruined relationships will easily lead to war , don’t you think?”

He was right. All of these countries were 'big countries' who desired to unite the continent one day. These three countries had survived by conquering many smaller kingdoms. A small spark would easily bring the flames of war into this land.

"At least, my country doesn't want such disaster now. It would not be bad to remain at peace for a thousand years. So, if any of you have good plan, please tell me. Let's divide it without any trouble, and go home satisfied."

After the manly speech of Hector Coldwood, the meeting room remained quiet.

"Tower Lord."

On the other side, Ragnar's eye contacted with the Tower Lord.

They were about to release their ultimate blow that would turn the tides.

Ragnar didn't have single chance until now.

The unexpected situation made him nervous.

'Ian Page, you bastard...!'

It was obvious. It must have been him who made this situation. That bastard must have persuaded his idiot brother to speak like that. Otherwise, that idiot, how could he do this?

'I have to fix it from now on.'

The Tower Lord nodded.

Ragnar started to open his mouth.

To the people in the council.

"I humbly suggest you one th..."

All of sudden

“A perfect method!”

Unlike Ragnar with careful voice, someone shouted loud and confidently. There was only one who could make such confident voice which was rather arrogant sounding. He was born to it.

“I have a plan.”

It was the Crown Prince Hayden.

Thanks to that, Ragnar’s speech was silenced.

“Then tell us everything what you know your highness Crown Prince.”

The arbiter of the council, Engolo spoke in haste.

He had authority to do so,

At least in this council.

“Our Empire’s Ivory Tower, precisely, at the mage tower, we invented a new magic. It is a mass detecting magic that allows us to detect hidden resources under the ground, and also let us estimate its amount.

By his word, every people in the council’s reactions were various. Most of the celebrities from the other countries doubted such magic, but Ragnar and the Tower Lord couldn’t manage their faces.

‘H, how...?’

They both thought the same thing. ‘Detect Resource Spell’ was their trump card. For today the Tower Lord invented it himself, and of course he never introduced it to the Ivory Tower before.

“Is that true?”

Other countries’ embassies asked him about its very existence.

The Crown Prince on fire said while pointing at Ian.

“Of course. I am sure all of you have heard of him before. The youngest Archmage in the history of our Empire, Ian Page, has invented it himself.”

With his word, the Tower Lord’s hands shook.

He felt like his spell had been stolen.

However, it wasn’t likely to have happened. He could’ve made the magic by simple imagining it, couldn’t he? If he wanted to make it, he could. But problem was.

‘Did he also know that a Detect Resource spell would be required for this meeting?’

He couldn’t believe that. He thought Ian was an innocent brat who was only interested in magic. He didn’t expect this youngster to see through the key point of this meeting.

“Wow...”

Many people were amazed. It was an ultimate key that would solve the problem of the meeting. Furthermore, it was unique technology that only the Greenriver Empire had. They had to admit it.

“By using this magic, we will make a type of ‘resource map’. Of course we also have to check the quality of the soil, as well. And after that, according to the map, we may divide it into several pieces.”

The Crown Prince was on fire.

He now lead the whole council.

“And we will divide those pieces fairly to three countries. Considering the soil quality itself, and the resources under it. Borders may be confused, but we may spend more than 10 years just focusing on developing and mining, won’t we?”

“Hmm...”

Positive reactions came out from the council.

Except the Tower Lord and Ragnar, everyone nodded.

“I am sure there is no other better plan.”

As long as the Detect Resource spell existed, there were no other better options. Basically, they desired hidden resources of the territory, rather than its soil itself. And such ultimate magic was exclusive to the Greenriver Empire.

“I guess everyone agrees with this.”

Soon, the Crown Prince gave the final blow to this meeting,

The final blow that only his Empire had authority to do for this meeting.

“That’s all.”

The main hero of today’s council was obviously, one man.

The Crown Prince of the Greenriver, who had numberless infamous titles, such as;

Idiot

Good appearance, empty can

Trouble maker of the Greenriver royalty

.

.

.

Hayden Greenriver was the main hero.

CHAPTER 55

UNEXPECTED HERO (3)

“Did you see? Did you? Hahaha!”

The meeting was supposed to be held for many days. However it had ended earlier by Hayden Greenriver and Ian Page, who thought of everything and not by Ragnar as everyone had expected.

“Your highness.”

“Oh, Captain. You should have seen it!”

With the Crown Prince’s happy face, Oliver was relieved. He as well, was very nervous about this meeting.

“I smashed the council... Khmmm, before this, let’s get some wines and start my story. We haven’t enjoyed it for a while, right? And let’s tour this city for a bit. We don’t always have a chance to come Demidera, do we?”

The Crown Prince looked at Ian and Oliver. As he said, when would be the next chance to play around? Ian nodded his head, and Oliver remained silent but with a positive attitude.

“Hahaha! Good. Ian, you are almost an adult, aren’t you? I will teach you how to drink like a real man, real men has special wa...”

“The Crown Prince, your highness.”

While the Crown Prince was thinking about alcohol, Ragnar, who hadn’t a single chance to speak and was supposed to be the main hero of the council, approached the Crown Prince.

He smiled a fake smile.

“What.”

“It was outstanding. Today, your little brother learnt many things”

Even with the cold response from the Crown Prince, Ragnar complimented him. He controlled his facial expression very well. Today, however, he couldn't truly hide his real emotions perfectly.

'His mouth is smiling, but his mind is not smiling.'

Not only Ian, but the Crown Prince felt same way.

'This is good.'

It was first time he defeated Ragnar, and its excitement was unspeakably good. His old hatred was mostly solved by this event.

'No more bad feelings, as well.'

During normal days, whenever the Crown Prince met the other princes, especially Ragnar, he felt a pressure that squeezed his heart. However, at the moment he felt nothing.

'That's strange.'

Although the Crown Prince didn't know that the feeling he used to feel was in fact, inferiority. However, this time, he wasn't inferior to Ragnar anymore. Hence, he hadn't felt the bad feeling.

'Maybe it's because I feel good today?'

After he made a brief conclusion, he laughed loudly.

While tapping Ragnar's arm, he replied warmly.

"Haha! That's good to hear, brother"

Thanks to his response, Ragnar's hatred was growing bigger. The pitiful Crown Prince used to growl at him with inferiority. Thus, every time Ragnar saw his struggling, he felt good. It made him feel superior. However, this time was different.

"You, too, eh... what's it called again? Ah yes! Practice! Always practice, and train

yourself! And... Whatever, do your best. Do you understand?"

Ragnar now lost his smile completely.

He barely prevented himself in making his angry face.

He didn't expect to hear such bullshit from the Crown Prince.

His pride was shattering.

'Fuck!'

After re-managing his face, Ragnar turned his face away. If he kept on seeing that idiot's face, he wouldn't be able to calm his mind anymore.

'It's all that brat's fault.'

He now looked at Ian.

The very existence who made him the most uncomfortable right now. Son of a bitch!

'That bastard ruined everything...!'

Ragnar ground his tooth. The Crown Prince, the knight who protected that idiot, and the mage who helped that idiot,

'I will make all of them regret it. I swear'.

Regardless of Ragnar's feeling, the Crown Prince was excited about tonight's party. He intended it.

"Ok ok, Let's have fun! We will blow away all the tiredness from last week. Oliver, you too, relax and enjoy tonight. Don't be too strict, okay? Ian, you too, you will be adult soon so... Ah, did I already tell you this?"

While the Crown Prince was getting more excited,

"Anyway, so... Huh?"

Ian's body started to turn. The Crown Prince was the first one who noticed that change. Soon, most of the people recognized Ian's change. Not only Oliver and Ragnar, but also Greenriver's embassy and its guards who were standing far away saw the change.

“I, Ian? What’s going on? Your body...”

Precisely, Ian’s body started to blur. At the beginning, his body blurred slightly, but as time goes by, his body started to blur more severely.

“I guess it’s my limit.”

“Limit? What do you mean?”

The Crown Prince couldn’t understand what he was saying.

Limit? What limit?

What did he mean?

“I apologize, but I think we better enjoy the party at the Royal Palace.”

“So what do you mean...”

“I will tell you in detail,”

Soon, his face started to blur, hence, his voice started to blur as well.

“At the Royal Pala...”

Ian’s body disappeared like a mirage.

When everyone was caught in the embarrassment,

The Tower Lord opened his mouth.

His voice was quite different than normal.

It was full of nervousness.

“A, an image? So he had been an image for a while...?”

He murmured like a mad man, and everyone could hear his voice.

He completely lost his mind.

“There is no such image spell in existence...”

In his understanding, it was impossible. Mirror Image only allowed its caster to make a puppet that can’t do anything but stand. He hadn’t seen nor heard about a puppet that can talk, move, cast spells, and last for a week.

“So all the plans we had prepar...”

Due to his mind being lost, it lead him to say things until Ragnar pulled the Tower Lord's robe quietly. Thanks to that, he woke up from his disoriented (delusion?), and quickly shut his mouth.

'So all the plans we had prepared were made into playthings,'

Unbelievable puppet magic.

Although it was unbelievable, everyone saw it with their own eyes.
It was some kind of new magic that he didn't know.

'By his puppet magic?'

Literally, their plan was 'played' by Ian's puppet. The Tower Lord had thought himself as 'The peak of magic', but he was made a plaything of by that youngster, Ian Page's puppet magic.

"..."

The Tower Lord Habert lost his words.
His pride was stomped.
He had passed around 70 years old.
He never felt such shame in his life.

'Hahaha...'

Many people were watching him.
He couldn't laugh out loudly.
But the way the Tower Lord laughed was weird.
His laugh was uncanny. It was based on something that came from his deep ego, 'madness'.



"My lord. This is the document plan about rebuilding the border village. Please read it and tell us any things to fi..."

"Nothing."

"Pardon?"

It was the basement gymnasium of the Pieric province castle. More than 10 days had passed since Ian became unconsciousness by the Puppet Play spell. However, the great land lord and his best warriors were still fully armored. Except the moment when they ate or went for the toilet, they kept protecting the gymnasium by rotation.

“How many times do I have to tell you? I gave you authority to make any decision for a while, didn’t I tell you before?”

“B, but...”

“Unless you dared to sneakily create personal benefits.”

The great landlord Kalian re-grabbed his axes quietly. By its threatening scenery, the middle aged secretary was surprised

“P, personal benefit? Why do you talk like that to me...”

“I know, I know. I know you can be trusted. Anyway, support the rebuilding project as much as we can. If it is still not enough, use money from my family cache. Do you copy?”

“Y, yes my lord.”

“Then go back. I need to protect my benefactor.”

Ian Page, the benefactor of the province.

It was the true honor and responsibility to accomplish his benefactor’s favor. Although it was getting longer than he thought, but it was a part of it.

“Zzz... Phew...!”

Not everyone was armored and awake like Kalian and his warriors. Mary, who sat next to Ian, was sleeping deeply.

“Zzz...”

“Ma’am Mary.”

“Phew...”

“Ma’am Mary.”

“Huh...?”

Mary opened her eye.

“Ehik!”

As her costume magic was dispelled, she made weird shouting.

“Sir... Ian?”

“Long time no see.”

“Y, you awake?

“As you can see.”

Ian was still lying down.

He couldn't move his body.

He hadn't moved his body for more than ten days.

Although he minimized his bodily cycles with the help of magic, but it wasn't be perfect though.

“You okay... Right?”

“It seems I have some problems at the moment. I feel a headache, I can't move and most of all,”

Ian paused for a moment.

Soon he opened his mouth.

“My stomach.”

“Huh? Your stomach? Do you feel a stomach ache?”

“No, I'm feeling hungry.”

He never said to someone that he was hungry, except for his mother. However he couldn't bear it anymore. Even a mage couldn't perfectly control their bodily cycle.

“A lot.”

Ian emphasized it.

CHAPTER 56 FAIRY QUEEN (1)

Already a day had passed since Ian stopped his 'Puppet Play'. After having enough rest, eating, and using mana breathe, his body mostly recovered from its damage. Now it was time to leave.

"Thanks to all of you."

At the front gate of Pieric Castle, Ian said to everyone. At the door, the great landlord Pieric, his best warriors, and Conducted Mage, Mary, came to say their farewells.

"What about staying for one more night? I know you are a busy person, but it's our way to hold a party for our savior."

Kalian murmured as he feels sad. He wanted to do something to thank Ian for saving his and his people's lives.

"It is already good enough protecting me for days. And also, I just did my duty of Archmage, nothing more than that. If any other Archmage came, they would do the same thing for you."

"But didn't you ask me to protect you for repaying the grace you gave us?"

"Haha. I was in a hurry at that moment."

Kalian made a small joke after Ian's humble words.

And he started his main topic.

"Well, I can't stop you. Then, before you leave, let's do that."

"What do you want?"

"You know, I heard that you became an eternal guest with Mogrian's house. Five years ago maybe? It was at the time when you were famous for your demerits in the Empire. I heard a rumor about it around that time."

"Yes I did."

"And I suggest that you become our Eternal Guest as well."

Eternal Guest.

What Kalian wanted was clear.

He had thought about it since a few days ago.
He wanted to make an oath as soon as possible.

“It is not something that can be done so easil...”

“What do you mean? We’ll just treat you as our precious guest. According to your reaction, I guess that that old fashioned man of Mogrian made an oath with many strict formal words and proof.”

It was true.

The Mogrian landlord did it like that.

They must know each other.

“Do you know the Mogrian landlord well?”

“More than just know. He was the best friend of my deceased eldest brother. Thanks to that, we know each other. He is a strict type of man that doesn’t suit with me though...”

Then Kalian recalled the past when he had played with his brother and the Mogrian landlord for a short moment. He made a slight smile.

“And if you are okay with it, we want you to be our Eternal Guest. It’s not just our favor for our savior. We have clear purpose for this oath. Although mages have great power, I don’t think all of them are as great as you, are they?”

Although he was always the type of man who would strike the enemy with his vanguards at the very front line recklessly, he was the landlord of the province. He heard and knew many things. He knew that Ian was a very rare and talented mage, and that there were few or no mages who could be a match to his power.

“It is solely my decision, but I think no one would regret this anyway, neither you, nor our people, nor the Mogrian landlord as well. He knew about it and did this five years earlier than me, what a sneaky and smart old man.”

The province had barely any chance to make such relationships compared to the Royal Palace. It was worthy enough for them to make any type of relationship with a mage, much less a great mage like Ian.

“Ah, but do not misunderstand though. We don’t always treat Archmages as Eternal Guests. Around 7 years ago, there was another Archmage who helped us before you

did. She wore bloody red robes. She was such a bitch."

She must be Helene.

It was long before she went missing in action, and before being defeated by Ian.

"Although she had great power, we don't always treat them as Eternal Guests. We suggest this oath, because you are worthy of it."

Of course, there was no reason for Ian to refuse it. Although he suggested it lightly, it was a heavy promise that imperial nobles must keep. This relationship would greatly help Ian one day.

'If I can receive the assistance of both the northern and eastern territories for a future plan.'

It would be more than just help, but a great power.

Ian ended his considering.

While nodding his head, Ian replied.

"I don't know. We can simply just do this oath which is called The Oath of a Thousand Years, but I won't refuse if you truly want it."

"I'm glad to hear that."

Schlik!

After Ian's confirmation, Kalian drew his sword.

It was a sword that he had prepared for this moment.

It seemed he was sure that Ian wouldn't refuse his suggestion.

"Since it is the heavy Oath of a Thousand Years, we should pretend to follow its formal process, shouldn't we? Please be patient for a while. I will finish it quickly."

The great landlord Kalian made the formal position for oath, while he poked the ground with his sword. Other knights who were watching him followed their landlord's position. He blamed Mogrian's landlord for being so serious with his oath, but now it seemed his oath process was very serious as well.

"The Pieric House will always welcome the visit of the Archmage, Ian Page, and we will gladly stand at his side whenever he requests the help of the eastern powers. In

the name of the Eastern Stream of the Emerald river, this oath will be secured from generation to generation, for endless generations."

It was quite similar to the oath that the Mogrian landlord did before. Kalian Pieric finished that heavy claim quickly, like a rap.

"Ergh! It makes me feel weird. I don't like these oath things, I wish I could just say 'let's do it!'"

As if embarrassed, he sheathed his sword with haste. Who would imagine this great warrior who fought against monsters so bravely would become embarrassed by an oath.

"Hope we can see each other again someday."

"Next time, please tell us before visiting. We will show you a real party of the eastern territory. I'm sure you will enjoy it."

With a smile, Ian and Kalian said bye to each other.

After a brief goodbye with each knight who came out to send Ian off, Ian finally said goodbye to the Conducted Mage, Mary.

"See you in 4 years."

"Y, yes?"

"At the Ivory Tower, after you finish your mission."

"Ah, yes! I will!"

She was supposed to be a dead person already in his former life. Her existence made Ian impressed. These tiny changes would cause different results compared to his former life.

'I don't know whether these changes will bring an advantage or disadvantage.'

Which direction will this life go?

Ian didn't come to a conclusion, he just stepped forward.

"Goodbye."

Ian successfully finished his first Archmage duty. Now he headed to the Royal Palace.

He was aiming to arrive there earlier than the embassy.

‘I may have some spare time.’

The embassy was a large group of men. Moving as a group would take them several times longer than one person to cross the border from Demidera to Greenriver.

‘This is perfect chance to prepare something.’

During previous years, due to being afraid of leaving his family behind and having individual lessons from the Ivory Tower, he had no chance to move outside the Royal Palace. It was a rare chance that was given to him.

‘I won’t have enough time later.’

Ian revealed his political intention officially. It meant he would suffer political conflict very soon.

‘It won’t be easy to protect my family closely.’

For the past several years, he could protect them nearby.

Protecting them by himself was the most reliable and safe way.

‘I need some kind of ally.’

Ian needed an ally.

‘A strong but loyal ally.’

He sought an ally who had great power, but who was also loyal to him. The reason was simple.

‘My family will shackle my area of movement.’

If he had not reached the 6th class and was unable to use Puppet Play, he would have been manipulated by the Tower Lord’s plan. Although he knew it was a trick, he couldn’t help himself.

‘I need to remove my fear of my family’s safety.’

Ian had to agree.

A precious value called family that he never had in his former life.

He desperately didn't want to lose this, and it was hard for him to leave them alone.

He confirmed this through the years.

'If I can't help myself,'

He only had one answer.

He had to find a very strong ally and let them protect his family. Like Oliver who always protects the Crown Prince, Ian needed such an ally.

'Then I might be able to move more freely.'

If he had an ally who could be trusted with his family's safety, he would be freed from his obsession on his family.

Then, his actions and thoughts could be extended.

'But the only problem is where I can find such an ally.'

A strong warrior like Oliver was very rare. Normal knights or guards weren't strong enough. In addition, although there were many mages who were familiar to Ian, they couldn't be hired as personal guards.

'An ally who is strong but can always protect my family nearby.'

It gave Ian a headache.

It wasn't that simple of a condition.

'Wait, it doesn't have to be Human, right?'

That's right.

The bodyguard didn't have to be 'Human.'

Strong, and would be loyal with some conditions, and a familiar appearance that wouldn't cause many problems among human society.

'A Fairy.'

After deep thoughts, Ian could remember one 'creature'.

Ian had a chance to meet them in his former life, while he was researching Dragon Chants.

'Indeed, a Fairy can be used.'

They were suitable for the conditions that Ian wanted.
Of course, only if he managed to persuade them.
They couldn't be easily underestimated.

'I need some preparation.'

Although time was ticking, it wasn't impossible.
After deciding, Ian flew into sky again.



Researching Dragon Chants.

It was a great project that Ian spent as much time researching as magic in his former life. Although he only understood a portion of Golden Dragon words, normal people would need more than a hundred years to understand its foundation.

'For normal humans, this included the language systems of other species.'

Especially those such as Orc shamans, Gnomes the relative of Fairies who lived under the ground, and Fairies in forests, and any creature which could use the power similar to that of 'magic', they were targets of Ian's language research. To do that, it was necessary to meet them face to face, and it was the 'Fairies' who gave him the most interesting experience.

'No. Maybe, a bad memory.'

Ian looked down after he smiled briefly. After a few preparations, he had moved straight down to a nest of 'Fairies'. With the bag that Ian kept hidden.

'It's lucky they live near my location.'

Unexpectedly, the nest of Fairies wasn't far away from human civilization. They were hiding on the top of the mountains where woodchoppers, hunters and herb collectors have traveled for a few centuries.

‘The problem is dispelling their illusion and protective spells.’

According to Ian’s research, it was the Fairies that could use magic the most fluently. They were good at many spells, especially illusion and protective spells that they installed near their nests.

‘No problem for now, though.’

Was it because he was just stronger than Fairies in magical power? No. When Ian visited here the first time, he was a 7th class master. Even at that time it wasn’t easy for him to break their magic, so it wasn’t magical superiority that had Ian full of confidence in.

Step!

Ian landed at the top of the mountains, the border of the Fairy’s protective shield. In front of Ian, there were only normal forests and mountains that could be seen. It was an effect of the fairy’s protective shield and illusion.

‘I struggled so hard to destroy this in my former life.’

He was full of pride in the title of the strongest mage in the world, yet he couldn’t think of any way other than destroying it. He tried to make contact with them, but they didn’t answer him.

‘I didn’t know it would be this simple.’

Soon, Ian opened the bag he brought.

‘Just little bit for now.’

From the bag, he pulled out a few of the flawless jewels. These protective spell enchanted jewels were the jewels that Ian left at the ruin of the old Ivory Tower five years ago. For past few days, Ian had carried them.

‘They are crazy about jewels.’

Fairies loved jewels, especially the ‘Fairy Queen’.

It wasn't the financial value of jewels that made them crazy.
They use jewels in their own special way.
And Ian knew their exact characteristics.

"Dispel the protective shield and come out if you want to have it."

Ian shouted after he laid down the jewels on the ground.
He also threw a few jewels into the protective shield.
Since it was enchanted with a protective spell, the jewels didn't break.

"I will just leave if you don't need it, okay?"
(W, wait...!)

While Ian was picking up the jewels and putting them into his bag, the sharp voice of a lady was heard.
Not with his ears, but with the mind.

(H, hold on a second, Human!)

The density of mana in the atmosphere decreased.
It was proof that the protective shield and illusion were being dispelled.
As Ian expected.

'Stupid and naive boys. Oh, maybe girls?'

They had the appearance of beautiful ladies.
A very tiny lady, though.

"I'm busy."
(Ergh! You short lived mortals!)

After a complaint from the Fairies, the protective shield was lost suddenly.
Now, Ian was able to see a hidden view that he couldn't see just few seconds ago.

CHAPTER 57

FAIRY QUEEN (2)

The area was full of giant trees and flowers.
Thousands of their nests were decorated with jewels.
That was the scenery within the protective shield and illusion field.
It was like a paradise of nature.

(Human, how did you find us?)

Innumerable adult Fairies gathered at the place where the protective shield was. They were still no bigger than a person's palm, but every adult fairy had the same level as that of 3rd class mages.

(Respond.)

Fairies had no specific language since they communicated through the mind. To Ian, they sounded like royalty. But to them, Ian's words sounded like a language they could understand. But still, they had their own letters.

“By the way, I came here to meet the Fairy Queen.”
(Our Queen?)

According to Ian's research in his former life, it was better to communicate with the Fairies in a simple and straightforward manner. If you tried to show respect and speak formally to them, it would instead confuse their communication.

“I want to trade something for these jewels.”
(...!)

For a short moment, the Fairies' eyes glanced over with astonishment. It was a natural response. They could be spiritually satisfied by simply watching and touching pretty jewels.

“This is the only excitement that they can seek’

Although Fairies had a lady-like body shape with clean and white wings, which looked like an angel, the reason why they loved jewels wasn't that innocent.

'It's like sexual arousal to them.'

Every fairy had the body of a lady, and they do not have sex to reproduce. To them, jewels were the only method that could satisfy their spirit and reduce their stress. The more flawless a jewel was, the more excited they'd become.

(What kind of trade for the jewels...?)

"I have more than 10 times the amount of jewels that I brought. Depending on the result, I may give most of it to you."

Jewels that Ian had brought from the ruins of the old Ivory Tower were of course, incredibly precious in the human world. They were more flawless than jewels crafted by a famous master. However, in the perspective of a Fairy, it was much more than that. Their rank was the same or higher than the 'Jewel of the Queen', which only could be possessed by the 'Fairy Queen'. And this strange human was saying that he had 10 times more than this.

(What do you want?)

"I want to talk directly with the Fairy Queen."

Ian still didn't bend his will.

(So I am asking you. I am the Queen of Fairies.)

The fairy who kept talking with Ian had now introduced herself as the 'Fairy Queen'. She introduced herself quite proudly as if she was revealing great secret, but honestly, Ian had known her identity ages ago. He just played around with them.

'Who could miss it?'

He recognized her straight away not only because he had seen her in his former life, but also because she had unique pink wings instead of white wings. He couldn't miss her.

"It's my honor to meet the Queen of Fairies."

(Yes. I will ask first. Are you truly a Human?)

“Yes, I am. I am a Human indeed.”

(Intriguing, you have much more mana than other humans.)

The Fairy Queen’s amazement was natural.

Ian was as strong as her.

‘She was freaked out in my former life as well.’

In his former life, Ian firstly met the Fairy Queen after he achieved 7th class master. At that time, she had reacted much more dramatically. She nearly confused him with some other entity she had known.

-Master Lysis Laden Zu? N, no way. he can’t be...

She clearly said that at that time. With hopes that it could be the name of a Dragon, Ian asked her many things, but she hadn’t answered about the name at all.

(You are not a normal Human, I can see that. Nor can I sense any evil aura from you. Good. I won’t ask you how you know about us or how you found this place. However, speak. What do you want for those jewels?)

The Fairy Queen asked Ian sharply.

She fluttered her baby-pink colored wings.

She looked like a beautiful butterfly.

(If you don’t reply honestly, you will die.)

It wasn’t an empty threat. If the Fairies focused their attacks on Ian, it would threaten Ian’s life. Although he was confident in running away, the Fairy Queen was sure that she could kill him.

“As I said, I want to trade something with you, Queen of Fairies. What I can offer is the finest jewels, much more than the jewels in this bag.”

With Ian’s offer, the Queen of Fairies drooled over it, as well as the other Fairies nearby. The jewels that Ian had brought had such power.

(You must want to receive something as a trade.)

“Indeed.”

Ian wanted two things.

“Firstly, do you have any special way to move a massive amount of jewels in a single time? I couldn’t bring everything, so I brought just a small portion of them. But to finish this trade successfully, I guess we need some other methods to move it.”

The special method that Ian expected was the ‘Interdimensional Inventory’. Ian already knew that Fairies had a few ‘Interdimensional Inventories’. However, he would look suspicious if he asked for it directly.

(For that one, you do not need to worry about. Even mountains of jewels wouldn’t be a trouble. Speak on.)

“All I want is two things. The first one is a method of transportation. If that is something that can be handed over to me, I want the method.”

(Nothing hard. What’s next?)

“An egg of a Fairy.”

(What? Did I just mishear...)

“You heard it right. An egg of a Fairy.”

The Fairy Queen accepted the first offer easily. However, for the second offer, she did not. Same as the other Fairies. They suddenly looked at Ian differently. Murderous auras were released from their small bodies.

(You dare to ask for it. Foul Human.)

It was a natural response. The Fairy species suffered the most when laying eggs. Even normal animals would desperately protect their babies and eggs, and so do Fairies.

“I know how these jewels affect your tribes. If you ask me how I know that, I would say I read it from the ancient records. So I suggest to you. Ten times more than the jewels in this bag. It would be enough to give one jewel to each Fairy.”

Giving a jewel with a grade of the finest level to each Fairy, which was something only the Queen could have, meant a lot to them.

“Please consider it carefully. Every Fairy would be spiritually satisfied more than ever in your history. The pain of laying eggs would be reduced greatly. Naturally, it would increase the length of life, power of each Fairy, and the number of your tribes, will it

not?"

Ian was right.

The Fairy Queen had thought the same.

It would bring a historical golden age for them.

(You dangerously know too much of our tribes. What ancient records taught you this?)

"I am the Archmage of the Greenriver Empire. They have many records that are more than hundreds of years old, and I have the authority to read it."

(Hmm.)

The Fairy Queen seemed to have become a bit more calm. While flying around Ian, she looked at him carefully. The fresh scent of spring surrounded Ian.

(Well, let's hear it. Why do you need an egg of our tribe? If you dare to try to experiment with...)

"I will hatch it and raise it."

(Raise it?)

A Human dares to raise a Fairy? To the Fairies, it was out of their common sense. However, the Fairy Queen didn't reply to it. She just let Ian keep talking.

"I need a strong ally who can protect my family. Humans are difficult to trust. To make a loyal, trustworthy ally, it's better to raise them early, but as you know humans grow slowly. There is also no guarantee that they will be strong after growing up."

(You are talking as if you are not a Human.)

"As you know, I am a special one."

(And you are full of yourself.)

The Fairy Queen smiled.

Her smile was as fresh as her scent.

"However, Fairies are different. They are a superior species, and smart. They are also born with magical talent."

(So, you are going to take it and try to be its parent?)

"I will teach it magic myself. Of course, I will treat it very well. I am quite a wealthy man among human society."

The Fairy Queen had to admit Ian's superior magical talent. Honestly, she was

confused when she saw him for the first time. If he had been a little bit stronger, she would've mistaken him for a 'different creature' instead of a Human.

"Humans live no longer than several decades. After I die, the Fairy would be free to go back to its nest. I promise that I will keep my word before I die. I will cultivate a great warrior for your tribe."

Ian nailed this point.

Fairies lived many more years than humans couldn't even imagine.
Its duration could just be called an 'overseas study' for them.

(I understand what you are saying.)

After consideration, the Fairy Queen swayed her wing. Whenever she swung her wing, the falling 'Fairy Dust' shined like a diamond.

(Although I can't give you a straight answer right away, I can think about it while I'm checking if you truly have enough jewels for our trade.)

She explained indirectly, but the point was simple.

She wanted to see the jewels with her bare eyes.

"It's a bit away from here."

(How long?)

"It won't take that many days for me."

(Nor for I.)

Fairies were great flyers, especially the flight of the Fairy Queen which could be as fast as Ian's best flight speed.

(I better check it myself.)

It was quite an unexpected suggestion.

She considered it that much.

She was responsible for her tribe.

(Do you mind?)

"Not at all."

(Good.)

The Fairy Queen decided quickly.

The Fairies started to make noise. It was a long time since the Fairies went outside. Even they couldn't remember their last journey clearly.

(My queen, but the last time an outsider...)

(Don't worry. It won't happen again.)

(How can you trust that Human's promise?)

(He overcomes the level of a Human indeed, but he isn't strong enough to hide his evil aura from me. It's different from the last one, trust me.)

After a few debates, or more precisely, after the Fairy Queen calmed down each of the Fairy's worries, she flew back to Ian.

(Lead the way. I will follow.)

Ian thought that she wanted to confirm, but not to extent of following him. Anyway, it wasn't that bad of a start.

'I still have some time.'

Ian had to obtain an egg before the Tower Lord and Ragnar arrived at the Royal Palace. After a brief calculation, he still had some time.

"Let's go then."

With Ian's fluent flight skill, the Fairies seemed shocked. Only the Fairy Queen followed him quickly with an uninterested face, while making some tricky flight movements to show off her superior flight skill.



Including Ian's former life, it was the third time he visited the basement of the ruin of the Ivory Tower. This time, however, he had a companion. The mighty Fairy Queen, who was equal to around a 6th class mage.

(It is an uncomfortable place indeed.)

She had repeated the words 'uncomfortable place' more than ten times already. Since she had left her nest, she kept saying that. It seemed she hated the Human world very much.

"You will feel better, soon."

(Humph, are you sure there are jewels in this place?)

"Generally, precious treasures in the Human world are normally hidden in worse places than this. It's quite a nice place compared to them."

Ian replied philosophically, but the Fairy Queen didn't understand his meaning. Actually, she didn't even care about it.

"This way."

Ian and the Fairy Queen had arrived at the bottommost floor where the Dragon chants were located 5 years ago.

"Here. If you look under this table,"

Ian opened the big drawer widely.

It was quite heavy, so he received some assistance from mana.

Screee!

With a noise, the first drawer was opened.

A total of three drawers were filled with jewels.

Scree! Screeeee!

Ian had opened the other drawers as well.

It was literally a party of flawless jewels.

There would be no Fairy who could stand still.

"How about this? Now how do you feel?"

(H, Human.)

"Bette....."

(It is not the problem!)

Unexpectedly, she didn't look at the drawers where jewels were. Instead, she looked

up at the top of the table, where the book of Dragon chants were supposed to be. She asked with an urgent voice.

(W, what was here before?)

“What?”

(I am asking you what was here before!)

Suddenly, Ian narrowed his eyes.

Did she feel the aura of the Book of Dragon Chants?

“There was a book.”

(A book?)

“It was full of letters that I hadn’t seen before. I am keeping it safe. I don’t have it right now, though.”

Ian replied innocently. He spoke a part of the truth, but he didn’t say he knew its identity. He was trying interrogating her.

“Do you anything about the book? I researched, but I couldn’t understand single letter of it.”

(Of course! How dare a Human try to understand master’s wor.....!)

The Fairy Queen quickly blocked her mouth.

Now, Ian could be sure about it.

There was a relationship between her and the creature, a creature of legend, but a creature which had proven that it really once existed by the success of Ian’s time rewinding.

‘Dragon and Fairy, huh?’

The fairy tribe must have some relationship with a Dragon, or they used to. Maybe this could help further Ian’s research on Dragon chants.

(Anyway, give up on reading the book. You won’t even be able to read a single letter of it.)

“But maybe I can read at least one, can’t I?”

(You are talking foolish. There are only a limited number of existences who are allowed to read the words. As you were born a mere Human, there is no way you can read it.)

CHAPTER 58

UNEXPECTED BENEFIT (1)

(Don't be foolish. Only those born with the ability to read the words can do so. You were born a lowly human. You could live a thousand lives and never be able to read its contents.)

The Fairy Queen stated this as a fact.

Her voice was full of conviction.

However, that's not quite true.

'I read it before and travelled back in time.'

There was someone, born as a human, that was capable of reading it.

And that's not all. This man has known this language for years.

Not a year, not ten years, but thirty years.

'Not like I need to tell her that.'

Ian evaluated the cost of the gems and pointed to them.

"I can tell you more about the book later, but I'd like to look at it more myself before that. These are the gems I mentioned earlier. I will give you 70% of them. I think that's more than a fair trade."

Will 70% of these jewels be enough to satisfy her? With that amount, every fairy would be able to have one or two gems to themselves. Several generations of fairies would be able to enjoy these gems.

(Aaahh~...)

The Fairy Queen's eyes became fixated on the large pile of precious gems. Even though

she is the Queen, she's still a fairy. She can't suppress her own desires for these gems.

(Th-This will do. I think that amount should be fine.)

The Fairy Queen quickly tried to hide her reddened face.

She twisted around in the air.

She let out a small amount of mana as she did this.

“That would work as well.”

(You know about this too?)

The Queen was no longer a small fairy Ian could hold in his hand. She had transformed into a woman that was the size of an average human. Her pinkish wings had also disappeared.

(Use this.)

The Fairy Queen that had become a woman, threw a sack at Ian. It was a small black bag that looked similar to Ian's. This was the 'Interdimensional Inventory'.

(This is the transportation method you asked about. Put the gems in there.)

The Fairy Queen left Ian as he started moving the gems.

She placed her finger on her temple.

She looked as if she was almost angry.

Her appearance was almost that of an annoyed housewife.

“Hmm”

By the time Ian had finished moving the jewels into the bag,

She looked as if she had made up her mind.

(I'm going to add another condition.)

“Condition?”

(The book that was located here. Bring it to me and then I will give you one of our eggs.)

“Aren’t you just changing what you promised me?”

(Promised? Did I ever make such a promise with you? I told you I’d come here to see the gems. You’re just trying to get a better deal.)

The words of the Fairy Queen were true. Of course, Ian did not plan on giving up. How else would Ian be able to continue his research?

“I refuse”

(I don’t understand you. Humans could never read even a single letter from that book. It will just accumulate dust until the day you die. There’s no reason for you to reject my offer.)

“Can you read the book?”

(No, I’m not able to either.)

“Then, why do you want it.”

(I know of a being that can read the book.)

“Who is it? This ‘being.’”

Ian asked a difficult question.

The Fairy Queen replied with a straightforward answer.

(I can’t tell you. Even if you were to ask me a thousand times, I’d never be able to answer.)

“Do you mean that you wouldn’t be able to tell me even if you wanted to?”

(Once again, you’re quite sharp.)

This is a new fact to me. Ian had never heard about this in his previous life.

‘But I can’t keep pushing the subject.’

“I still can’t give you the book.”

(Ha? What the hell are you saying...)

“If you want it, you can have it after I die.”

(That’s impossible. I don’t know what could happen to the book in that time. This is completely different than sending a fairy back after you die.)

The Fairy Queen is even more stubborn than Ian could’ve predicted.

It seems like she won’t back down without a good reason.

“You said the reason you want this book so badly, was because you know the owner, but you can’t tell me more than that.”

(Isn’t that enough of a reason to give me the book?)

“It’s not enough. I also know the owner”

(...What?)

“Dragon.”

The word ‘dragon’ caused her great surprise.

Her beautiful, turquoise eyes wavered slightly.

“That book, it’s written in the language of the dragons.”

(H-How do you...?)

“It was just a guess. Though, judging by your reaction, I’d say I was right.”

(You! How dare you...!)

“I can’t give the book to you unless you can give me a reason why you’d deserve it more than me.”

Of course, there’s a deeper meaning to Ian’s words.

Ian was trying to determine the relationship between the Fairy Queen and the Dragon.

(W-Wait a minute. I said wait!)

Disregarding Ian’s hidden intent, his request for a better reason made sense. Furthermore, it was hard for most people to be able to tell what Ian was truly thinking.

(...I’ll tell you a little more.)

“I’m listening.”

Ian did his best to hide his smile from her.

But there are many ways for her to avoid answering truthfully.

The Fairy Queen began to speak,

(It’s just as you said. This book belongs to a dragon and the writing in the book is the language they speak. It is a noble language that only they would be able to understand.)

“I already know all of this. If you think you can fool me in some way, please stop.”

(Do you think I’m stupid? Listen to the end!)

The Fairy Queen answered Ian with biting words.

(I am from the same family as dragons. One day, after almost any trace of these dragons disappeared, we created our home in the remains of the dragons’ nests. It seems as if an eternity has passed since that time, but I am sure that one day they will return.)

This was also the first time Ian had heard anything about this. Though, he did expect it to some extent. If this Fairy Queen did have this kind of relationship with these dragons, does she really think that’s enough reason for Ian to give her the book? Of course, it wasn’t.

(That book belongs to the dragon clan. I will return these books to where they originally belonged, so quit stalling already.)

The Fairy Queen sounded even more insistent now.

She was clearly telling Ian she was done talking.

‘That must be the real reason’

The Fairy Queen wants to return the book to its original home.

Is her reasoning really so straightforward?

If that is the case, Ian should be able to speak more honestly with her.

‘I’ll reveal a little more to her.’

Ian had decided it was time for him to reveal some information he had kept hidden so far. This deal between the two seemed to be more beneficial than he had previously thought.

“I believe what you’re saying.”

(If you believe me then go and get that book now!)

Again, she’s acting with disdain towards Ian. That’s to be expected. She has been the queen of the fairies for nearly a thousand years. Yet, a human was able to steal such a precious item. How much humiliation can one fairy take?

“I’m sorry, but I just need one more thing.”

(Really, who do you think you are...!)

“There’s something important I’d like to speak with you about.”

(Huu, I see. What is it?)

“Let’s suppose, hypothetically, that there is some great and powerful being that is able to read this book. Between the Queen and this great being, whom do you think deserves to own this book?”

Ian's question was unexpected.

The Fairy Queen became visibly annoyed.

(Hah! What kind of question is that? The obvious choice is to give it to this powerful being.)

“Even if that being isn’t a dragon?”

(How many times do I have to tell you?)

“Isn’t it possible for there to be a being capable of this that isn’t a dragon?”

(If that were the case, that would’ve been part of their plan all along.)

The Queen’s faith in these dragons was firm.

Whatever their plans may be.

It was the first time Ian actually showed a big smile.

“I understand.”

(What was the meaning of that pointless question? I’m starting to get annoyed with you. I thought you were actually pretty smart, but it turns out you are just another human...)

“I’ll show you something interesting now.”

(What?)

The Fairy Queen once again looked irritated.

However, this look of irritation quickly turned to confusion.

“Atar”

No, she was more than just confused.

She placed her hands over her ears.

The ears of a fairy are a hundred times more sensitive than any other race.

“Haka”

Atar Haka

It's time to finish the magical chant.

Fire!

Crimson flames erupted from Ian's hand.

The flames became even more intense and their size grew.

“Uuhh...”

<<<

Ian's body began to tremble.

This was the result of this magic demanding too much mana from him.

(Wh-What are you...)

“You already know. Don't you?”

Of course, she knew.

She was a member of the dragon family.

This is the same magic they would've used.

Would there be any reason for her not to know of 'Dragon Chant Magic'?

(How can you...)

“I wonder.”

(Nonsense. How could a human being ever...!)

The Fairy Queen was shocked.

How is Ian, a simple human being, able to use this magic? He's not a dragon. If he was a dragon, she would have known the first time they met. The 'Energy of the Clan' that's inside of her would have been triggered.

(You must be a dragon.)

"I'm not. I am nothing more than a human being. The things that you believed to be true are wrong. Isn't this enough evidence to prove that?"

(...)

"The words in the book, I can read and speak them."

The magic Ian used was something he learned from his continued study. A type of Dragon Chant that was used by the Red Dragon Clan. It creates a flame that burns hotter than any other in existence. The only problem with this spell is that it consumes an immense amount of magic.

"The dragon chant never disappeared."

Moreover, this dragon chant was different from the language of the Gold Dragon Clan. Their language was different from the language in the book. The language itself would not have disappeared once it had been used.

"Of course, if the original owner of the book appears, I'll return it. However, even you must agree, that at this point in time, I should be the one to hold on to it..."

(You should.)

The Fairy Queen was clearly impressed with Ian.

(I will no longer ask for that book. Until the day it's true master returns, or you breathe your final breath, that book is yours.)

She was suddenly calm.

Could it be that she has really changed her mind?

"Thank you."

(Instead...)

The Fairy Queen wanted more.

She wanted to keep her word.

KUGUGUG!

A deafening boom echoed throughout the room.

However, it wasn't just a deafening noise.

KUGUGUGUG.....!

The heavy stones in the room began to move.

The cause was clear.

"There were more?"

Ian knew that there were no other rooms below the basement of the Ivory Tower. Yet, a new pathway had appeared on the other side of the room. It was a very large passage, but there were dozens of stone gates within. Only after passing through gate after gate after gate would Ian be able to reach the end.

'Did it react to the dragon chant?'

That appeared to be the most likely cause.

There was nothing else that could have caused this.

After all, this is the place where that book was located.

"This is quite the unexpected bounty."

Of course, Ian didn't actually know if this new passage would lead to something beneficial to him.

He just had a good feeling.

Whatever lie at the end of this passage.

It's something that would never harm Ian...

“...?”

It was just at the moment Ian decided to step towards this passage.

Kong! Kong!

A sound.

From deep within the new passage.

‘Footsteps?’

They were rather loud for footsteps.

But, it was clear due to the pattern.

It was the sound of someone’s footsteps. Not just that.

‘It’s coming this way fast.’

Kong! Kong! Kong!

The sound of something massive getting closer.

It wasn’t the sound of a human.

It was something much larger than that.

(What’s happening now?)

“I don’t know.”

Ian quickly readied his staff and the Fairy Queen returned to her original form. This form was much better suited for combat.

Kong! Kong! Kong! Kong!

Soon, the source of the sound came into sight of the two people, rather, the two mages in the room. The massive creature rushing towards them in a passage that was too small to contain its gargantuan frame.

Kong! Kong! Kong! Kong! Kong!

It looked as if its entire body was made up of bones.

The creature's head was in the shape of a lizard skull. Large, thick bones made up most of its body. It wore armour made out of iron and carried a weapon that was easily three meters long.

“That's...”

Even Ian, who had lived two lives, had never witnessed anything like this before. He had never even heard mention of a creature fitting this description. What could this monster be?

(A diseased dragon...?)

The Fairy Queen seemed to know the identity of this monster.

She even knew the exact name.

“A dragon? What kind of dragon is that?”

(They're just like me. They are of the same family as dragons.)

“It isn't an enemy?”

(Originally, that would be the case, but...)

The Fairy Queen cut her words short.

Now, she looked into the gnarled eyes of the dragon.

There was nothing but darkness there.

The light signifying the soul of the being was nowhere to be found.

(I don't think it sees anything as a friend anymore.)

Did it acknowledge her words?

The skeleton warrior swung its massive weapon wildly.

It was just as the Fairy Queen said.

CHAPTER 59

UNEXPECTED BENEFIT (2)

*BANG! Crack... *

The desk where the jewels had been stored was destroyed by the skeleton warrior's spear. That massive spear worked more like hammer rather than spear.

“Can I kill him?”

(He is not a living being anyway. Furthermore, it seems soulless now. You may attack it without hesitation.)

Originally, the main part of a skeleton warrior was their spirit.

And this skeleton didn't even have a soul in it.

“I see. Then, thank you.”

(What?)

“I have no more mana to attack him, haha.”

(...)

The amount of mana consumption for the Dragon Chants was still too much for Ian to handle. He risked burning out his mana because he trusted the loyalty of the Fairy Queen to the dragons. However, he didn't expect the Dragon Chant to bring down the skeleton warrior.

“Hold it for me as long as you can. I will restore my mana as much as I can.”

(Humph! I am the most precious servant among my masters' servants. It's piece of cake for me to destroy a soulless skeleton warrior!)

The Fairy Queen rose up arrogantly.

She was as strong as Ian.

Her arrogance was reasonable.

“Phew.”

Ian drank the last half elixir he had. Then, he quickly stepped backwards and focused on his mana breathing. The speed of his mana regeneration was faster than others. He might be able to join in quickly.

SPARK!

Noises of lightning from the Fairy Queen shook the basement loudly. Most of the fairies were born to specialize in ‘light type magic’.

And lightning was a branch of light type magic.

(Soulless bone servant, you picked wrong enemy today!)

It was the first time he saw the fighting scene of a Fairy Queen.

(You must be totally mad. You dare try to challenge me, you mindless creature?)

And the first impression was quite simple.

Unlike her gorgeous angel like appearance,

‘Talks a lot.’

With that tiny body, she tweeted noisily, and smashed it with loud lightning magic. Thank god that this skeleton warrior was soulless; otherwise her combat would stimulate its anger.

“Gerrr...!”

(Ah ha, you can’t say anything since you have no soul, can you? What a relief. I hate your tribes’ slow speed of conversation anyway. Hope you just stay soulless!)

Regardless of her noisy combat style, her combat skill was superior. Instead of shield magic, she dodged its attack with her swift flying skills, similar to Helene.

‘Actually, the queen is much more fluent than her.’

Natural born agility and reaction speed, using the advantage of her small body, and powerful 6

class lightning magic. It could be the ideal goal of Helene.

(Humph, your body is tough, at least!)

But even Fairy Queen had her own limitations. Precisely, it wasn’t a fair match for her. The skeleton warrior was abnormally strong as one of the dragon households, and it never got tired.

“Geerrrrr...!”

(Fall down you stupid guard!)

On the other hand, the Fairy Queen didn’t have a good method to give some heavy blow to the skeleton warrior’s hard bone. Unfortunately, they were fighting under the basement, so there were only a few lightning magics that were allowed to be casted. So Ian was the key person for this fight.

(Human! Do something!)

“Weren’t you full of confidence a few minutes ago?”

(If I was fighting outside, it would’ve already become dust!)

As a queen, she tried not to lose her pride. After a long sigh, Ian checked his mana. More time was required to filling it fully, but he had enough to use some good spells.

‘I better finish it with a single blow.’

It was the best solution for that tireless skeleton warrior. Although its armor and bones were amazingly hard, but the Fairy Queen’s previous attacks must’ve left some damage on it.

‘The best spell I can cast with this amount of mana.’

A spell that may quickly defeat that rampage skeleton warrior, Ian was thinking about

it. Only a few seconds later, he could remember one.

“Queen.”

(Why do you call? I am busy now!)

“I will do something, just prepare to dodge it.”

(What...!)

That was the last conversation.

Ian started to move.

Firstly, powerful freezing energy snared the skeleton warrior's leg. It wouldn't be able to hold the skeleton for long due to its abnormal power, but that moment was enough for Ian.

“Cone,”

Ian immediately casted another ice typed spell.

On the air, a giant cone-shaped icicle was formed. Its enormous size made the room look small.

“Of Ice.”

Cone of Ice.

It was the name of spell of Ian's choice

The giant cone ice flied to the skeleton warrior. Rather than penetrating, it attempted to demolish the skeleton warrior

Grrrrrr!

Soon the giant ice block smashed the skeleton. Not only smash it, but it pushed the skeleton and started to destroy the wall behind the skeleton warrior. The skeleton tried to escape from the collision between the ice block and wall behind it, but it didn't have enough power to.

“Pant! Pant!”

After Ian casted the chain of spells, he breathed roughly.

He quickly consumed the mana he regenerated in a hurry.

It was a natural reaction of his body.

(Y, you barbaric human.)

“Not yet.”

However, Ian’s spell hadn’t ended yet.

After he gestured the chatty Fairy Queen to move away,

“Ice Bomb.”

After he casted the spell flicking his finger,

BANG! BANNGG! BANBANG!

The massive ice cone started to explode.

Quickly, Ian casted a shield spell to guard him and the Fairy Queen from its shards.

(You completely demolished it.)

“That’s what you would do if we weren’t in the basement.”

(I won’t deny that.)

Ian wasn’t trying to fawn upon the Fairy Queen. If they were standing outside, the Fairy Queen would call a numberless amount of lightning from the sky, but anyway, Ian’s magic was impressive. With the limited place and mana, he destroyed the skeleton warrior with great efficiency.

(Let’s go further. As the skeleton warrior appeared from the other side, maybe on that side, there might be...)

Their Masters, who she and her tribe had waited for more than hundreds years, especially the owner of the book of Dragon Chants.

(My master, Laden Zu.)

The Fairy Queen went first to the end of the aisle.

She seemed twice as excited now.

(Master Laden Zu!)

With full of excitement and expectation, the Fairy Queen shouted.

With the shout they arrived at the end of aisle.

(...)

It was an old living room.

There was a bed, tables, bookshelves and stationeries.

Tools of alchemy and burnt out lanterns.

“Thick dusts are on those.”

Ian reasonably investigated the room.

Thick dusts and color change due to age was observed.

It mustn’t have been used for ages.

At least tens of years,

‘Maybe hundreds of years.’

The Fairy Queen also acknowledged it. As she didn’t find what she had expected, she became depressed quickly.

“This must be disappointing for you.”

(Humph! I shouted just in case he might still live here.)

Still she had enough energy to guard herself.

There were no worries needed for her.

(Investigate closely. There could be something in here.)

Ian totally agreed. The situation was telling that the dragon, or something similar very likely had stayed here for a while. There might be a critical clue to translate the Dragon Chants.

“Huh?”

And soon, Ian could find one of the clues. On the table, there was diary, with a simple memo like when he first found the book of Dragon Chants.

[You reached this level, really?]

[I do not know you, but I am impressed.]

[I will give some award for this.]

Like before, the memo was written like the trick of a naughty boy.

burn!

And it burnt just as before.

‘Present, huh?’

After Ian waved his hands to blow out the ashes of the memo, he picked the dairy which was regarded as a present. Its size was tiny.

(What is this?)

“Present.”

(Present?)

The Fairy Queen asked since she didn't see the memo.

Answerlessly, Ian opened the diary.

'Another Dragon Chant maybe?'

It wasn't.

The content wasn't Dragon Chants.

It was written in the letter that Ian could read.

'Formula?"

The diary was full of a complicated and long formula.

Amazingly, it seemed the whole diary was about one single formula.

(Hmm, It's the formula of a human.)

The diary was small and thin. However, considering that it was about one single spell's formula, it was unique. There was no spell this complicated and long. Even overwhelming 8

class spells didn't have this much length for a formula.

(It seems quite tricky, can you do it?)

"Hmm."

Ian couldn't answer easily to the Fairy Queen's question. It was first time he saw this nonsense formula. But,

'It is worth a try.'

As a mage who represents humanity's mages, and curiosity as one of those mages he was challenged. Ian was born to do this. He never wanted to be defeated by magic.

"Whenever I regenerate my mana, let's try it straight away."

(Straight away?)

“It’s not something that impossible.”

The book of Dragon Chants and the diary. A memo that plays tricks. Ian felt strongly that he was being played by someone’s plan, but Ian would generally play along.

‘Playing along is worth it.’

According to the Fairy Queen, the one who planned this must be a dragon. It was a trick that was planned by the legendary creatures which were the beginning of magic.

‘By the way, I can’t even guess about this formula.’

Generally, formulas had their own unique features. And a great mage like Ian could easily be able to guess the aim of the formula by having a look at the formula. However this formula was totally out of his common knowledge.

‘It is totally messy.’

By clicking his tongue, Ian finished reading the diary.

After repeatedly reading the diary, Ian could memorize the formula.

(Yawnnn...! When will you start? Is it even possible to do it today?)

After waiting for a long time, the Fairy Queen asked while yawning.

“Now.”

Ian closed the diary.

He gathered enough mana.

And he memorized the formula completely.

He was indeed deserving to have the title, the strongest human in the world.

‘With no mistakes.’

After drawing enough mana to his brain, his brain started to calculate the formula. Ian didn't allow any single mistake and pauses. It was basics of magic.

'Quickly'

Stimulating his brain he started to read the formula.

Soon, it started to cast out a result.

Attractive golden lights started to spread out.

Wieeeeng - !

With a little vibration, the golden light emerged.

It was released for only a short moment, around ten seconds.

"..."

That was all.

No more effects.

Ian couldn't feel any difference.

'What?'

Surely, the formula worked well.

Ian felt it, and mana was consumed.

But neither effect nor change had occurred?

Suddenly,

(H, human?)

The Fairy Queen called Ian with embarrassed, shaking voice. With curiosity, Ian looked at her.

“...What are you doing?”

What the Fairy Queen was doing was extraordinary. The Fairy Queen, who used to call Ian as ‘human’ arrogantly, was now bowing to Ian while shaking her body.

(I, I do not know. W, why why...)

The Fairy Queen was embarrassed also.

(I sense the power of the household from you...?)

“Power of the household? What is that?”

Ian hadn’t heard about the word.

(Only the masters can operate such regulations on us... But how you, human can...?)

“Queen.”

(H, how you...)

“Stand up.”

With his word the Fairy Queen quickly stood up.

“And bow down again.”

(Y, you dare!)

She was angry at Ian’s order.

But she couldn’t resist.

Her body automatically bowed down.

‘Now I see.’

Ian made huge smile.

Now he understood.

“Calm down. I just did some experiments.”

(E, experiment....?)

Ian had felt something different from the Fairy Queen.

It was hard to describe.

‘I felt more like... she was under my power.’

Ian couldn’t think of any suitable expression.

“I guess that’s all I need. Let’s move out, queen.”

(S, stop! Explain!)

Although she was shouting, her body was following Ian.

There was no ‘authority to refuse Ian’ for her.

“As I promised, I will bring jewels to your nests. 70 percent, actually, I will just give you all of it. I guess I can assume it now as my safe storage.

Ian was full of confidence.

Now, Ian wasn’t giving jewels as a trade.

It’s more like he ordered her to keep it safe.

“Instead, I will not ask for the egg of fairy.”

(...!)

The Fairy Queen couldn’t say anything more.

She could expect what Ian would say.

“You come with me, and protect my family, directly.”

(I can not! I have to protect my tribe’ nests...)

“I know fairies can communicate with each other even in far distances. Whenever your tribe’s nests are in danger, we will go there immediately, so no problem.”

The Fairy Queen’s self defense word wasn’t effective.

(Y, you can’t do this! You had promised...!)

“But you requested me the book of Dragon Chants, as well.”

(But I canceled my request, didn’t I?)

“You canceled it because it was out of your plan. Similarly, unless my plans go wrong, I want to ask you to protect my family.”

(Eik! Human you dare...!)

“Let’s travel quietly.”

(...)

She couldn’t say anything.

The ‘Master of the Household’ wanted it to be.

“It’s good to have a quiet moment.”

While enjoying the quiet peace, Ian moved out of the basement, followed by the Fairy Queen who was upset.

As Ian had expected, he had gained a lot of unexpected benefits.

CHAPTER 60

THE RISE OF THE STRONGEST (1)

“Do you know where the other households are?”

(How would I know? I haven’t met them for ages. Around 500 years, I guess? Maybe more than that.”

“Five hundred...”

After Ian and the Fairy Queen moved the jewels to her nests, they talked a lot while returning to the Royal Palace. The more they talked, the more Ian found how different of a life he and the Fairy Queen had lived, though.

“Who is Laden Zu?”

(I can’t say.)

“It seems you still can refuse to say this. Is it because I am asking about dragons?”

(...Hmm. I guess so.)

Furthermore, she could refuse to answer some deeper and sensitive questions. It seemed some ‘superior’ power of the household was preventing Ian to access some information that was not allowed.

‘This power is not perfect.’

However, it was good enough. She could refuse to answer some serious questions about dragons, but that was all. In other cases, she had to ‘obey’ his order. It was a very strong power that was even able to order her to suicide.

“By the way, do you have name, my lady?”

(Of course. All of sudden, why?)

“I can’t just call you queen. Ah, in addition, please polymorph to a normal human as long as we enter the palace.

From a distance, Ian could see the walls of the Royal Palace. Ian planned to arrive at the palace earlier than the embassies, and it was successful. He found out that there were still around ten days left until they arrived, thanks to the Crown Prince and Oliver.

(I don’t want to be that humiliated...)

“You had polymorphed to a human easily at the basement.”

(At that time, I had no choice due to the interdimensional inventory.)

“Then, assume that you don’t have a chance this time as well.”

Truly, she had no choice again.

She had no power to disobey the power of the household. Although she really didn’t want to, she had to transform herself to a human.

“Hmm...”

(Now what?)

“It’s nothing big, but,”

After Ian looked at the Fairy Queen, he opened his mouth slowly.

“Can’t you be more normal?”

(What?)

“You would draw even more attention than your original form.”

Ian was right. Fairy Queen’s original form was already unique, and her appearance would draw too much attention, unless he hid her in the interdimensional inventory. However, her human form would cause even more attention than her original form.

(I can’t help you for that. This is only human form I can do.)

“Is there anything more than a human?”

(You’re a sensitive brat.)

While complaining, the Fairy Queen turned into a different form. This time she had turned into a bird species. It was a ‘peacock’, with a bright pinked shining tail.

(Are you satisfied now?)

“That’s too much as well...”

(Then what about this?)

After the peacock, she turned into a wolf, with bright pink fur.

It was a wolf which was bigger than bulls.

What’s wrong with her polymorphs?

“Can you turn into something more... like a small and ordinary animal?”

(Small and ordinary animal...)

After a while, the Fairy Queen had a spin in the air, and then became a different creature. Again it was bright pink colored, but it was acceptable to Ian.

(Now you like it?)

She turned into a small ‘cat’.

Except its fur color, she looked the most normal among different animals.

That was the best she could do.

“Not bad.”

(Humph! You sensitive rude arrogant human.)

It was irony that she called Ian that, but anyway Ian was satisfied.

The cat form was a much safer form. People might just regard her as a cat with a pretty color.

‘I was seriously considering to secretly carry her within the flask.’

Ian thought it would be to mean for the Fairy Queen though.

It was relief that she could do some transformation tricks.

“Now, may I ask your name?”

(It is an honor for you. My name is not allowed to be known by others. Only my masters can call it. I will speak it once, so listen carefully.)

What’s so proud about her name? Soon, Ian figured out the reason.

(I am the 7th queen of all fairies, Lysis Kirel Vaspo Ray Lavelaor Espellia Sereman the 7th.)

“...”

Ian wasa lost for words.

What a uselessly luxurious long name.

None of the humans in this world would have such a long name.

(There was a master who especially liked me. The master gave me an additional name whenever he finished his travels through human world. He gave me names of the human he liked or sounded pretty. I know you would think it weird, but it is a precious name for me.)

The Fairy Queen had turned into her original form. As she feeling nostalgic, she smiled gently. It was a short moment, but her face showed no arrogance, but only happiness.

“No I don’t think that way. It is pretty name.”

(Do you really think so?)

“Yes. However... It’s too long for cat’s name. I would pick name Espel, the shortened

version of Espellia."

Ian chose the name which sounded the best among her long name. The Fairy Queen didn't complain about it as well. Every name 'the master' gave to her was precious for her.

"It's time to transform into Espel."

(I never ever imagined I would transform into a human's pet cat. I won't forgive this shame easily. I guess I have lived too long.)

The Fairy Queen, precisely, the pink cat 'Espel' sighed for this twist of destiny.



"Sir Ian asked me to do him a favor by delaying the returning schedule of the embassy as soon as he disappears."

"Delay? Why?"

"He didn't tell me the reason. I haven't seen such illusion magic sir Ian had shown to us but I'm guessing it's related to that. Even the Tower Lord was shocked for his new spell."

The main person who delayed the embassy's returning plan, was the captain Oliver Raywood.

"There must be a serious reason that he had to use such high class magic. I guess he needed some extra time to cover his problems."

The Crown Prince accepted Oliver's suggestion. In the name of a successful council, he held many parties, and by using the soldiers' health issue as an excuse, he reduced the speed of the march. Furthermore, he took a rest whenever he had a chance.

"Hahaha! By my word, those Coldwood and Lo became silent! And consequently, I said to them 'this magic is a unique magic of my country, so give us extra territory for distribution!' so then..."

Even though they were only about ten days away from the palace, he was delaying the march. At the relatively big village, he stopped the march and held a little party. Who?

The Crown Prince, knights and soldiers.

“Hmmm... I am repeating this too much, aren’t I?”

“Huh? N, not at all, your majesty. It doesn’t bother us at all. It is a true heroic story that pumps our heart in excitement. If you allow to, we want to hear it again and again.”

The middle aged soldiers said so as representatives of the other soldiers. However they seriously enjoyed the Crown Prince’s success. If Ragnar had such a success, they wouldn’t be surprised as Ragnar used to be a man on a different level from the world, but it was totally different story for the Crown Prince.

“Is that so? Haha! Then I will keep talking. Where I had stopped? Ah! So I said to them that ‘this resource detecting magic is our very unique technology’, so I asked them to ‘give us more territory!’ the first time, they kept giving me excuses, so I...”

It was the kind of ‘vicarious satisfaction’ to them. A few days ago, the Crown Prince was laughed at for his foolishness and uselessness. Although few felt he had changed, the majority underestimated him greatly. They thought he was just an untalented prince who was born in a good family luckily. However, such a man led the council and brought numerous advantages to their country. It was the Crown Prince Hayden, the idiot Crown Prince.

“...”

On the other hand, the 5th prince Ragnar, who watched such scenery from a distance, he left to a tent while grinding his teeth. It was the tent of the Tower Lord.

“Your highness.”

The Tower Lord was reading some letter. As it was written in paper, it seemed that the letter was a secret report.

“Now what?”

Ragnar asked coldly. He knew this whole situation and council was originally planned by the Tower Lord. It was the plan for Ragnar, only. However, he couldn’t do anything. Only that idiot Crown Prince took advantage on this stage.

“And what I have told you before? Ian Page must be eradicated before he becomes

more of a threat to us, didn't I? And I have told this since years ago, am I wrong?"

"Indeed, you said that to me your highness."

"And what did you answer with whenever I told you about him? You gave me excuses that you will turn him into mine as a powerful weapon, so wait for a moment, didn't you?"

"That is true, indeed."

"But, now what? Is Ian a useful weapon to me? He is a weapon that blocks our way and is destroying our plan."

Even at Ragnar's sharp question, the Tower Lord kept his smile. While checking the report, he said gently.

"My apologies, this old man made the wrong decision. I should've dealt with him quickly, with haste. Who would expect him to create a magic that hadn't existed before?"

According to the report, Ian's illusion appeared at the Royal Palace as well. It meant that he made more than one of these superior illusions. Now he didn't angry about him, rather respected him. Respect as a mage to another mage.

"Your highness, I won't give you anymore excuses. I won't guarantee anything this time. However, our waiting is over."

"Over?"

"I asked you to wait previously, and today is the last day for waiting. Everything is prepared now."

With the word, as the Tower Lord gestured, surprisingly, someone was revealed from the corner of the tent. Although the mysterious person's whole face to body were covered by black robes and hoods, but the person had obvious a lady's bodyline.

"Creating totally new spells, it is not only Ian Page that had such successes. Come on Helene. Greet our highness."

With his order, the lady with the black robe, the one who caused the entire maelstrom

at the Eastern Great Grass Field by handing over the special illusion to the Shaman King, 'Helene' revealed her face. Soon, she kneeled down and bowed to Ragnar.

"It... honor... greet... your... highness..."

However, her voice was strange. It was slow and dull. Furthermore, her voice was very dark. Ragnar knew Helene very well. She used to be the arrogant one, didn't she? Her current voice was totally out of her common character.

"Ah, I greet you. Hele... What the...!"

Ragnar saw Helene's eyes.

His heart was shocked.

He barely managed himself in not fainting.

Helene's eyes weren't human's anymore.

"Y, your eye...?"

There were no white parts on her eyes.

Her eyes were full of black.

She looked like a devil from an old tale.

"Do not panic, my lord. She is still human, and my royal servant and now she is your royal servant."

As the Tower Lord gestured, she covered her face with the hood again. From her, no more arrogance nor any emotions were expressed.

"And that pesky pest mage friend will soon devote his life on you. So please forgive my previous mistakes generously."

During the previous 5 years, or maybe even more than that, the Tower Lord researched 'Black Magic' secretly. The wild card of the Tower Lord, which he didn't need in his former life, was about to revealed.

About 7 days left until the embassy's return, at the front of the Ivory Tower's field, numerous mages, except the Tower Lord and Archmages who joined the embassy, had assembled at one place. Of course, Ian was there.

"This is the newest version of mana storage. In terms of the class of a mage, this can store mana... a lot. Around 6th class I guess?"

'Vans', who used to be the novice engineer of the 'Thram's workshop' 5 years ago, was now an official engineer and regarded as the most talented young engineer in the workshop. He explained the new mana storage's features.

"Honestly, since we don't have any data higher than 5th class, it is not guaranteed, but do you remember you asked for a test last time? At that time, this mana storage contained 90% of the Tower Lord's mana very easily."

Vans' explanation was relayed to every mage who was gathered here. The giant device that was delivered to the front field of the Ivory Tower was a mana storage, the capacity was enhanced much more than the previous mana storage.

"B, but Sir Ian. Excuse my rudeness, as I know, I don't know any hextech devices that requires this much mana storage. I wonder what is this for... Y, you don't need to tell me if it's private!"

But still, Vans' face was full of curiosity. If he needed a huge amount of mana, than it is much cheaper, and compact to use multiple standard mana storages that were connected, rather than this needlessly giant storage.

"It's been long time since I renewed my class registration, and I will do it today."

"Class registration?"

Class registration.

Whenever an official mage of the Ivory Tower overcame his or her class level, they registered their new current level. And Ian hadn't done it with his full power. Hence, in record, Ian was officially known as only a 4th class mage.

"Thanks to that, many rumors were circulating."

Some said he was hiding his full potential, and some said he just met his limitation.

Many rumors were created, and most people agreed with second rumor. So, most of mages knew Ian Page as a 4th class master, but no more than that. Still, he was the second strongest mage, so what he had achieved on the record was already great enough.

“Don’t other Archmages usually do class registration by using multiple connected mana storage? As I know, the Tower Lord does it the same way...”

“I think I will need more than that.”

“What?”

Ian didn’t reply to Vans anymore. Instead, he brought the giant mana storage at the middle of the field with his magic. Everyone’s eyes became round.

“I, is that even possible...?”

“I don’t think so.”

The gathered mages started to make some noise. There was only one reason that they had gathered here. Ian suddenly claimed to do a class registration. Although 5 years had passed, Ian was still the ‘youngest’ Archmage, the second of the Ivory Tower, and the idol of young mages.

Smash!

The giant storage could be seen by everyone now.

Ian put his hand on the storage.

“I am sure you guys already know why I am here. During the Archmage induction, I awakened the next level of magic. Now, I want to show my new achievement for my colleagues, firstly.”

Ian had a short and powerful speech.

What kind of enlightenment gave a new level of magic to the mighty 4th class mage? Precisely, how strong is he now? The mages’ eyes were full of curiosity.

“Originally, it is manners to show this registration after the Tower Lord returns from

the mission, but I can't stop this excitement anymore. Hence, although I know this is rude, but I want to show my new achievement as soon as possible."

By Ian's word, many mages nodded. They were mages. Mages were born with an inborn sense of curiosity and investment. All of them knew the excitement of stepping into a new level.

"So I hope you guys can understand my excitement, happiness, and acknowledge what I have experienced. Actually, I am sure you all will understand."

Ian was sure they would understand. It was the only sincere part of Ian's speech. Before the Tower Lord came back, Ian would register his new level straight away.

'From now on, I am the strongest.'

CHAPTER 61

THE RISE OF THE STRONGEST (1)

Ian had observed and expected many movements of the Tower Lord and Ragnar.

They must be in hurry.

The Crown Prince wasn't a threat to them at all.

They were alerted of his 'supporter' though.

"That would be me."

And that made Ian nervous. What kind of tricks will they use to target Ian?

The Tower Lord had achieved only 5th class, and Ragnar only had the Tower Lord who fully supported him.

'In my former life, the Tower Lord achieved everything he wanted and deceased.'

The Tower Lord literally possessed and achieved everything he wanted, and died peacefully. He successfully held Ragnar as new emperor, and became the most powerful Tower Lord in the history of the Ivory Tower. Hence, other mages followed the Tower Lord quite well. Although each one had different levels of loyalty, he didn't have an 'enemy'. Even Ian, at that time, was with Ragnar.

'The common points from my former life and this life is that the event of the Great Grass Field, and the hasty schedule of the council of the three countries. Details and timeline was a little bit different, but its general event flow was quite similar'

And if these two big events were all planned by the Tower Lord, from the illusion spell that caused the maelstrom at the Great Grass Field and to the council of three countries, what could be his next step? He was suspicious enough.

'And if the Tower Lord decided to use dark magic as well,'

He would use the black magic as much as he could.

'I am not afraid'

There was nothing to be afraid of though. He was confident in overcoming whatever tricks that the 5th class Tower Lord would try to use against him. Furthermore, he now had a powerful household member, the 'Fairy Queen.' There was no weak point on Ian at this point.

'But I better be prepared fully.'

Ian didn't overlook any single possibility though. In his former life, he was poisoned by Ragnar who was not mage and even sucked at sword fighting. He had gained enough lessons from that.

'I won't lower my alertness and preparation.'

The best alert system that Ian could have, the most urgent preparation for Ian, was the support of the Ivory Tower.

He had manipulated this since 5 years ago.

He turned many mages to stand on his side.

He didn't force mages who wanted to stay neutral.

Ian needed another offer that he could give to those who stayed neutral.

There were not many alternative offers that existed as the youngest Archmage.

'I will become the strongest of the Ivory Tower, superior to the Tower Lord.'

Finally, Ian had a chance.

He was now, 'the strongest' of the Ivory Tower, the invulnerable one, a '6th class Great Mage'.

'I will consume all of the Ivory Tower'

If he couldn't persuade mages one by one, he could just devour and control the whole

command centre of mages.

‘This time again, I will destroy it.’

Ian’s two hands were connected to the mana storage. It was a similar scene from 5 years ago. Mana was injected continuously, and the color of the storage was changed. From blue, the color symbol of mana, to dark blue, and then to black, which indicated the capacity limit of the mana storage.

‘But.’

This class registration was a ‘show’.

So it was necessary to show something more spectacular and special.

Not only showing off his quality and quantity of mana.

‘If the first act was showing the appearance of the youngest Archmage Ian,’

Act 2 of today’s show was about ‘Ian Page, the strongest of the Ivory Tower’. He needed some proper ‘performances’ to show it dramatically. He had decided to show a special performance this time.

Cr, crac, Crack!

The surface of black colored mana storage started to crack. It seemed it was quite a durable one since it was a brand new manufactured device. However it was showing its limit. From the cracks, struggling mana was leaking.

Wieeeeng – !

Until now, it was similar to the past 5 years. From the cracked mana storage, leaked mana caused strong wind. Since it was a 6th class level of mana, it wasn’t just wind. After the storage blew up completely, a storm would be released.

‘Now!’

Quickly, Ian detached his hands from the storage. Then he stretched his both hands to the sky the length of his shoulder. Then he casted a very special magic.

“Mana-”

The records after the 5th class magic were rarely recorded. However, there were still a few records left about it. There were few magic that were described as ‘the ultimate magic’ in legends. Among those legendary magic, there was the most famous one which was.

“-Drain.”

It was Mana Drain. The ultimate magic that absorbs the mana of a target, was just casted by Ian.

Woooo – !

Spontaneously, something amazing happened. The mana that was released from the broken storage, that massive amount of mana was assembled to one point within the storm that was caused by it. The point was between Ian’s one hand to the other hand. The massive mana was now forming a huge ‘sphere of mana’.

“Hiyap!”

As compressing the sphere, Ian squeezed the sphere violently. Then, the storm was calmed, and the mana sphere was getting smaller. Precisely, it was being absorbed, into either side of Ian’s hands.

Clap!

As the mana sphere was absorbed completely, Ian’s hand made a clap.

“...”

The result of today’s show was completely different from 5 years ago.

Ian didn’t breathe roughly, and his body was caught in a shining blue light.

His eyes were full of a blue aura.

This was the temporary effect of Mana Drain.

The massive amount of mana Ian had injected to the storage, was reabsorbed into Ian.

“Did he just use Mana Drain...?”

“So he overcame the 5th class?”

“I, is that mean he is now stronger than...”

They knew Ian was a Great Mage.

They were aware of that he had an unfathomable talent not heard of in history, and soon he would overcome the Tower Lord’s level.

Most of the Ivory Tower expected the day would come in the future.

However, it was not now. It was way earlier than they had expected.

“Q, quickly! Chec, check the capacity of this storage...”

Some mages quickly moved around. Mages who had been trading hextech devices started to check if that the storage really could hold mana of the 6th class, and the secretary who records the class registration quickly went back to the Ivory Tower to record many historical new records that were achieved by today’s class registration.

“S, sir Ian. What the...”

“6th class? And with Mana Drain spell?”

Mages who used to follow Ian gathered around Ian. There were so many things they wanted to ask. Few months ago, he was about 4th class master, wasn’t he? However, after he visited the Great Grass Field, he became 6th class all of sudden.

“What the heck did you see in the Great Grass Field? Did you meet something like a dragon?”

“It would be already shocking enough if you become 5th class, but now what, 6th class? Please don’t say this is all a set up to fool me, do you?”

6th class was literally a class from the legends, not only for normal people but even to mages. Actually, mages knew even better how far and unimaginable the class was, so they always dreamed to see such a level. Then, Ian appeared with such a level of class. It was natural they were full of curiosity.

“Let’s get inside first. It is quite cold outside.”

After Ian calmed down them, as he walked into the tower with confident smile, many mages followed him, with eyes of curiosity and respect.

7 days later.

The march of the embassy just arrived to the Royal Palace. The people of the empire greeted them greatly. The main character was, of course, the Crown Prince Hayden. His great success at the council already had spread throughout the whole continent.

“Welcome! Crown Prince Highness!”

People made a way and bowed their heads. This time, they didn’t just bow due to being afraid of the royal blood. They were sincerely bowing to the Crown Prince with respect. The success of this Crown Prince, who was once regarded as a useless idiot, moved many people’s heart.

“Your highness! Please give me your glorious smile!”

One immature girl of a noble family shouted while waving her hand. The Crown Prince was famous for his very handsome face, not only infamous for his stupidness.

“Halt.”

As he heard the favor of the girl, the Crown Prince ordered the march to stop. Soon this blond handsome man approached to the girl.

“Y, your highness!”

As she didn’t expect him to really come, she bowed her head with fear, and the Crown Prince relieved her by giving a flower to her. Nobody knew where he brought the flower from, but it was a quite normal yellow colored petal flower.

“Your highness...?”

“Take it. It is hard to find in the capital city.”

After giving the flower to the girl, the Crown Prince came back to his carriage. And he didn’t forget to wave his hand to the people. He looked like a famous handsome actor,

rather than the Crown Prince.

“Hey, captain. How was I? Good?”

The march of embassy started again soon. The Crown Prince asked Oliver, who was walking near his carriage. It seemed he wanted to receive some feedback of his action he had just showed to the people.

“Uh... That was...”

“That was?”

“At least it would be good memory for her...”

While Oliver was in embarrassment, a savior had appeared.

Oliver quickly moved the Crown Prince’s attention.

“Your highness, sir Ian had come.”

“What? Ian?”

Quickly, the Crown Prince stretched his neck out of the carriage, and looked around. Soon, he could see where Ian was. Actually, Ian was not alone, but he came with other mages of the Ivory Tower, hundreds of mages including 5 Archmages.

“...?”

With that scenery, the Crown Prince’s face became stone. It made him recall a bad memory from 5 years ago. It happened when he came to the city with Ian, from the Mogrian Province, and the Tower Lord and his followers took away the prisoner Cecilia rudely.

“Why is he with those bastards...”

5 years ago, the Ivory Tower stomped the Crown Prince’s pride in front of the whole populace. Was Ian trying to do that again?

“The Crown Prince, your highness.”

However, it didn't happen.

Actually, the exact opposite situation happened.

"The Archmage of the Ivory Tower, Ian Page, and the other mages, sincerely welcome and celebrate your successes at the council of three countries."

The mana enchanted voice of Ian was well spread to the embassy, as well as all the people who were there. Furthermore, they bowed their heads soon after Ian's announcement. They showed their respect to the march of Crown Prince.

"...Ha, HA! HA! HA!"

The Crown Prince laughed.

Oliver nodded his head as well.

It was totally different to 5 years ago.

It was the exact opposite.

5 years ago, the Ivory Tower mages blocked the march of the Crown Prince to 'show off power of the Tower Lord and the Ivory Tower'. But today, they blocked the march of Crown Prince to 'show off the success of Ian and the Crown Prince.' Ian confirmed the Crown Prince made such a great success that even mages showed their respect, as well as Ian Page, who was the new trend of the Ivory Tower.

'What are those bastards doing...?'

The Tower Lord shook his fists furiously. Ian's action caused him to be furious in so many ways. Ian showed off his social power in the Ivory Tower, and smashed down the pride of Ivory Tower to the ground in front of all the citizens.

'You, you dare...!'

Soon, the march of embassy started.

The Tower Lord's eyes made contact with Ian's.

The Tower Lord's face was full of anxiousness.

On the other hand, Ian made warm smile.

It was a hypocritical smile that the Tower Lord used to use.

Ian was mimicking such smile.

That was the beginning of the 'main conflict'.



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